The Evolution of Civilization

Joseph McCabe

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By Joseph McCabe

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The A B C of Evolution

The Evolution of Civilization

By

Joseph McCabe

Author of "The A B C of Evolution," etc.

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PREFACE

The last twenty years have witnessed a progress of science which it is difficult for us to estimate. The nineteenth century was justly called "the century of science" in comparison with its predecessors, but, if our century sustains the pace of advance with which it has opened, it will win an intellectual triumph to which the whole chronicle of man affords no parallel. It is something to reflect that this great mental and moral achievement belongs to an age which is too often accused of selfishness and narrowness of interests: and that it is in large part the brilliant work of American men of science—notably astronomers, geologists, physiologists and psychologists—which has thus carried the mind of the race far above every previous mental altitude.

Amongst the dramatic advances of knowledge which make up this broad triumph of the mind none is, perhaps, more attractive than the recovery of the early chapters of our own human story. No other, certainly, more vividly impresses upon us the new intellectual power of the race. We have but to imagine some learned orator in one of the marble-fronted halls of the old Roman Forum, or some philosopher in one of the tranquil suburban gardens of Athens, telling his

fellows all that six great civilisations had learned about the earlier history of man! They knew not one thousandth part of what we know about cities which were even then crumbling into ruins within a few hundred miles of them.

Modern science has passed its magical wand over the ruins. Languages that died more than two thousand years ago have come to life once more. Cities that were buried so deep that the memory of them had passed from the lips of the race live again, with surprising fulness and colour, in the pages of our archæologists. We walk in the spacious chambers of Assyrian palaces or Egyptian temples. We tread the quays of Babylon; gaze from the civic centre of Athens at the exquisite buildings which shine on the hill above us; peer into the homes of artisans who laid down their tools in Crete three thousand years ago; join the pampered worker of ancient Rome in his "Trade Union" wage or his princely entertainments.

But greater than all this richness of detail is the connected narrative of the story of civilization which we can now put together. Deep in the Nile's mud, and scattered over Europe, are ample traces of the pastoral folk who passed into what we call civilization. Deeper still are relics that man dropped upon the soil during half a million years' journey from lowest savagery to the threshold of civilization; and even during the earlier million years, when man was too early in intellect to leave his imprint upon any object, we

faintly discern him, a wandering, naked, hairy savage, moving slowly and unconsciously toward his destiny.

Today, for the first time in the whole history of the race, the long evolution is broadly intelligible. The mists still lie upon many a lower level of the crawling human pilgrimage, but enough is plain to give us a reasonable view of the entire course. I have in an earlier work, "The A. B. C. of Evolution," given, for people of little leisure, a sketch of the upward climb of life to the primitive human level. Here is presented on the same simple and summary lines, a continuation of the life-chronicle through its first human phase, as far as the tragic fall of Roman civilization, the greatest catastrophe in the human calendar.

No reader will expect to find here the detail, the colour, the rounded completeness of larger works. I trust to send him on to such brilliant works as those of Professor Breasted and other authorities. My aim is, chiefly, to follow the thread of continuity of development which one is apt to lose in larger works: to show how the entire course is directed by world-conditions as surely as is the course of the Mississippi over the plains of the United States. In particular I show how the great Ice Age put an end to the long lethargy of the primitive human and brought about conditions which explain the rise of civilization.

But in addition to this general aim I seek to correct the prevalent misconception of the moral status of the older civilisations. In his masterly survey of the entire

history of the race, Mr. H. G. Wells has singularly failed to do this. He does far less than justice to ancient Egypt and Babylonia: he is profoundly unjust to Athens and Rome. Modern research has made an end of these old misconceptions of the character of the oldest civilizations and it is an essential part of the story that we should understand the evolution of idealism. We are no longer permitted the luxury of shuddering at the iniquities of Babylon, Athens, or Rome. To the rightly informed man, indeed, the wonder is that from the moral and social point of view we have advanced so little beyond these communities. It is here, more than elsewhere, that history becomes the science and art of living as well as a record of deaths and dynasties. We have to discover the secret of the partial successes and long failures of the past. That is my chief aim.

J. M.

October, 1921

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	A Million Years of Childhood	1
II.	The Wonders of Ancient Crete	19
III.	The Wisdom of Old Egypt	36
IV.	By the Rivers of Babylon	52
V.	The True Position of the Hebrews	72
VI.	The Splendour of Greece	84
VII.	The Vices and Virtues of Rome	102
VIII.	The New Era	120

The Evolution of Civilization

CHAPTER I

A MILLION YEARS OF CHILDHOOD

WHAT *is* civilization? It is a sure sign of modern progress, at least in sentiment, that this question now rings out, defiantly, the moment we begin to speak or write on such a subject. No earlier age in history ever asked the question, or would have tolerated the suspicion that it was not civilized. Yet very many ask themselves to-day whether the historian of the future, turning over the blood-stained pages of the chronicle of the twentieth century, gazing with pained astonishment at pictures of the conditions in which the majority of the race still lived in the year 1921, will call *us* civilized.

We ought, therefore, to begin such a study as this with a precise definition of civilization. But a moment's reflection will show the reader that this is impossible. Civilization is not a fixed standard of institutions, or of mental and moral cultivation. It

is a relative term. When the ancient Greeks called all other peoples "barbarians," the word literally meant "stammerers" or "stutterers," and was not quite so arrogant as is generally assumed. But the Greeks saw that their own political institutions, their forms of democratic citizenship, were far superior to those of the other peoples of the world, and they regarded themselves as—to use the modern word—"civilized"; that is to say, having a relatively high standard of citizenship.

We now know that there was a time when the whole human race had no more title to be called civilized than has to-day the most primitive wanderer in the forests of Central Africa; and that somehow the greater part of the race has risen very far above that condition. Thus "the evolution of civilization" means the slow and gradual development of the higher and more complex institutions—the higher standards of art and knowledge and commerce and politics—which do, in spite of all their defects, raise us to a level of thought and sentiment which is as high above that of early man as his level was above that of the man-like apes.

The story of man before he became civilized was told in my earlier work, and all that we need do here is to consider certain features of it which it is important to bear in mind. This is important not only as knowledge of the past, but even for the proper understanding of our position to-day. Most people know the theory which Mr. G. B. Shaw has for some years

been hurling at our degenerate human race. He has lately re-affirmed it very emphatically in his *Back to Methuselah*. The human race, he says, has had a long trial, and has proved unworthy of its high destiny. It is therefore possible that the Vital Principle—Mr. Shaw's God, or Soul of the Universe—will withdraw from humanity, and take up some other branch of the tree of life for the highest purposes.

This is an extreme and grotesque form of pessimism. It is now absolutely impossible for any other branch of the animal world to overtake, much less outstrip, humanity in intellectual development. But the pessimistic feeling which has driven Mr. Shaw to imagine this absurdity is, in more or less degree, shared by many; especially now that Europe lies in a trough of reaction after so many years of war, and the future is still so uncertain.

The best antidote to this depressing pessimism is a sound conception of the general outline of man's story on earth. It is now definitely known that man has been on the earth for something between one and two million years. That seems, at first sight, to confirm the feeling that the human race has had a fair trial and been found wanting. But it is just as definitely known that what we call civilization is not more than eight thousand years old. Moreover, there was no continuous progress during these eight thousand years. The conditions of the ancient world were such that civilization perished time after time, and a new section

of the race had to learn its lessons over again, often (if not generally) with very little aid from its predecessors. In the next chapter we shall read about a most promising civilization which flourished for thousands of years in Crete—about two hundred miles from Athens—yet was almost unknown to the Athenians a few centuries after its decay, and was totally unknown to the rest of the world until twenty years ago.

Civilization, in other words, has not yet had a fair trial. It has barely begun. We must, in view of the facts which we now know, regard it as a thin film of idealism which has developed on top of a million years of human savagery. This thin film of aspirations and fine sentiments has to control, and finally subdue, the impulsive life which had grown strong in man during a million years of unrestrained animal activity, to say nothing of the millions of years of antecedent animal life which have left their deep mark on the bodily frame we have inherited. It would be a remarkable triumph if man had, during the short and constantly interrupted period of civilization, entirely tamed a nature that had run wild for more than a million years. It would seem still more remarkable when we reflect that during nearly the whole of the period little or no attempt was made to educate the overwhelmingly greater part of the human race.

That is the social value of knowing something about the early story of man. One of the first and surest conclusions we draw from it is that we are only just

beginning to be civilized; that we men and women of the twentieth century are only now stumbling on the threshold of the adult life of humanity. The real story of civilization lies in the millions of years which still remain for man on this planet, if some great cosmic catastrophe does not bring it to a premature end.

The next point of importance in approaching our subject is to understand the reasons for the long stagnation, or appallingly slow development, of humanity before the dawn of history. First, perhaps, it is well to say a word about the length of time which I have, in the title of this chapter, assigned to the childhood of our race. All such figures are uncertain, because they are very difficult to estimate, and it must be distinctly understood that the round number which I give is merely the *lowest* figure that is consistent with our present knowledge. Sir Arthur Keith, one of the leading authorities on the remains of pre-historic man, gives us (in his *Antiquity of Man,* 1915) a diagram representing the tree of life from which the human stem branched off. He places this branching of the human stem from the general "anthropoid" group in what the geologist calls the Oligocene Period; and he says, quoting the authority of our leading geologist, Professor Sollas, that this Oligocene Period *closed* about 1,800,000 years ago! A recent school of geologists, which estimates the age of rocks from the traces of radium in them, would actually multiply this figure by ten; but it is impossible to entertain such an age for man. It

is enough to say that no geologist would allow less than a million years since the close of the Oligocene Period.

We may therefore safely say that it is at least a million and a half years since the human branch of the tree of life separated from the ape branch. Now we have no human remains and no prehistoric implements that seem to be more than half-a-million years old. That leaves a round million years during which primitive man was so low in intelligence that he did not even think of knocking two flints together to give a better cutting edge to one of them. No doubt this crude half-man used stones which he found on the ground as well as sticks. But that scarcely lifts him above the level of animal intelligence. The stark fact is that a hundred years of search have not discovered a single object upon which this early man left the faintest imprint of intelligence. He was, for the whole of that million years, lower than the lowest "savage" known to modern science.

Some will wonder why we say that man existed at all during that period, if there is no positive trace of him. But, while we have no remains of man during that period, we *have* remains of his ape-cousins. We have found skeletons which show beyond question that large man-like apes—even more man-like than the apes of to-day—lived in the South of France and in India more than a million years ago. Now these apes and man had a common ancestor. Whether they had an immediate common ancestor, or whether the human

branch separated from the tree of life at a still earlier date is disputed. But there is no dispute whatever today in any section of science which is concerned with man—anatomy, physiology, archæology, ethnography, psychology, etc.—that he, body and mind, was derived from a common animal ancestor with the apes. Reactionary writers merely throw dust in the eyes of their readers by quoting (carefully suppressing the date) older men of science who died before the evidence was complete. No authority in the world would now admit a doubt about it. Man and the apes had a common ancestor, immediately or remotely; and therefore, if the apes existed at least a million and a half years ago (in the Miocene Period, as any geological work will show), and were already fully developed and scattered over the earth, it follows that the human or semi-human (humanoid) stem also existed at the same time.

Some of the leading American authorities have recently worked out a very interesting theory of the relations between man and the apes. They believe that the cradle of the human race, the region in which the earlier common family divided into apes and men, was Central Asia. We know that some two or three million years ago what we now call our Arctic Circle was so warm that plants like the magnolia flourished there; and it is supposed that the great family of early mammals, from which descended our familiar herbivores and carnivores (horse, ox, elephant, lion, tiger, etc.), lived in that region. As the climate grew colder, the mammals

are supposed to have passed southward, in three great streams, upon America, Europe, and Asia.

At the time of this southward movement the monkeys were already developed, and some of them passed directly into America from the Polar region. The main body of the monkeys descended to Asia, and with them was the most advanced of all the mammal families —the large group which was to give birth to the apes and men. It is, as I said, disputed whether the ape line and human line had not separated from each other before that time, but most authorities believe that the separation most probably occurred at the time supposed in this theory. Then, it is said, the apes wandered on to the South of Asia and to Africa, and in the enervating conditions of the tropics they found no impulse or stimulation to advance further. The human, or semi-human, branch of the family is believed to have remained in Central Asia, under more stimulating conditions. The climate grew steadily colder, as our whole geological record testifies. The great mass of the Himalaya Mountains was rising. Moist, warm regions of Asia were drained by the uplift, lowered in temperature, and stripped of their rich forests. The primitive human or semi-human animals were forced to quit the trees and take to a more adventurous and exacting life on the ground. A new departure was made in the direction of developing intelligence.

On the whole, this theory represents what most of the authorities think in regard to early man; except

that perhaps the greater number put the cradle of the race in the region of the Indian Ocean. Mr. H. G. Wells has, in his *Outline of History,* followed a theory that man's immediate ancestor was a ground-ape, but few are disposed to entertain this view. Professor G. Elliot Smith believes that the most important event was when, a few million years earlier, the common ancestor of man and the apes and monkeys *began* to live in trees. The change would mean a decay of the sense of smell and a quickening of sight and the use of the fore-limbs; and this would, as the distribution of the various centres in the brain suggests, promote the development of what we may call the "intelligence-centre." Professor Smith, a very high authority on such a subject, believes that the rest of the story is merely a very slow and gradual development of this early advantage. One feels, however, that some other event of great importance must have happened to set the apes and men on a line of development which would take them far beyond the monkeys. When we reflect that the apes have partially, and men entirely, ceased to be arboreal, and when we realize how stimulating to the senses and fore-limbs a descent from the trees would be, we conclude that probably the *ascent* of a branch of the early mammals to the trees began the superior development of the fore-part of the brain, and the *descent* of man's immediate ancestor from the trees was the second decisive circumstance marking out man for separate evolution.

Some may feel that these are small matters to offer as explanations of the rise of man. It is quite easy to ask us to reflect on the music of Beethoven, the poetry of Shakespeare, or the sculpture of Michael Angelo, and say whether we think ascending and descending trees has any relation to these superb creations.

But this is mere rhetoric of the most misleading character. Ten thousand years ago there was nothing remotely approaching these artistic powers; yet all admit that our Beethovens and Shakespeares have been developed out of Neolithic men. Five hundred thousand years ago there was nothing on earth above the level of a Bushman, yet no serious person doubts that civilized man, even the highest, has been evolved from this lowly savage of half-a-million years ago. And when you remember that this early prehistoric savage had already undergone *a million years* of human development you begin to see that, if there is any mystery about man's advance, it is in the slowness of the advance during an appallingly long period. The race has made more progress during the last ten thousand years than it made during the first million years of its existence. It is, therefore, quite absurd to raise difficulties about the early period of man's evolution.

For our present purpose, however, it is important to try to understand this earlier and longer period. If we can ascertain why man made so little advance

during the earlier period, we have a clue to the more rapid progress of recent times. One part of the explanation is clear, and it must be noted at once. Whatever be the share of heredity in evolution—a point still in dispute, though the importance of heredity is certainly far greater than used to be thought—the work of environment, of natural selection, is clearly essential. Now the modern environment of civilized man intensely favours intelligence. It is still a very imperfectly organized environment for the promotion of fine character, but it does undoubtedly promote mental power. That is one plain reason why mental evolution has been so rapid in the period of civilization. Man had first to develop intelligence enough to create an environment which would foster intelligence.

That is a fair explanation of the advance during the historical period; but we still fail to see why the struggle with nature—the struggle for life—worked so feebly in developing man's intelligence during the earlier period. Few authorities on the subject seem to have realized the need of explaining this, and I have found no reason to modify the explanation which I have advanced for the last ten years. It is that man had no social life during the far greater part of the prehistoric era, and his real progress began when the conditions of an Ice Age compelled him to adopt social habits.

The question of the social factor in the evolution of civilization has given rise to a good deal of confu-

sion. Prince Kropotkin and Dr. A. Russell Wallace exaggerated the importance of the social factor (as opposed to Darwinian struggle). The fact is that social types of animals belong only to the last geological period, and that even these—beavers, bees, ants, wolves, wild cattle, etc.—have little intelligence, which is not on the same line of development with instinct at all. It is often forgotten that the evolutionary value of social life depends mainly on the power of communication between members of the social group, and this is very slight indeed among the lower animals, and seems to have been little better in prehistoric man until the Ice Age. It is, therefore, quite a mistake to think that it helps us to suppose that man was from the first a social animal; as various sociologists have affirmed (on no evidence), and as Professor Carveth Read has recently suggested in his *Origin of Man*. If man was a social animal from the start, the million years which it took him to reach the level of lowest known savagery, from the level of the chimpanzee, would greatly discredit the efficiency of the social factor itself.

But all the evidence we have is against the supposition that primitive man was social. The higher apes are not social; the lowest human groups are very imperfectly social; and in the very abundant relics of early man collected by prehistoric science there are no clear traces of group-life until the middle of the Ice Age. It seems, therefore, most likely that during

those million years of almost unprogressive childhood early men wandered over the face of Europe and Asia in family groups only, and that the lack of social life and power of communication is the chief cause of the long stagnation.

There is no need to consider here the way in which liberal Catholics and a few other non-scientific writers would get out of the difficulty. They would suggest that the human mind, as we know it, was not evolved, but created. No psychologist or anthropologist in the world would now countenance that view, and it is waste of time to discuss the opinions of men who would settle scientific questions by their preconceived ideas. We have not many skulls or skeletons of early man—only about forty specimens of the whole prehistoric race (at least, before the New Stone Age). Moreover, these skulls are often so battered and imperfect that (as in the case of the famous Piltdown skull) the highest authorities differ from each other in reconstructing them and estimating the intelligence of the men to whom they belonged. But for every bone of primitive man we have at least a hundred thousand of his stone implements, and these tell a consistent, unequivocal story of very gradual advance from the lowest savage level to civilization. In those weapons and implements the slow progress of man is more faithfully recorded than the advance of the British race is recorded in its literature. They begin with flints (Eoliths) so feebly and crudely chipped that many experts refuse to see human work-

manship in them; and there is a gradual evolution, without the least gap or leap or sudden advance in intelligence, from these to the elaborate tools and machines of modern civilization.

I have told this part of the story elsewhere, and will give here only a brief and up-to-date outline of it. We have no traces of man during the million years after the close of the Oligocene Period. The first implements we have are the Eoliths, found chiefly in the eastern counties of England and in Belgium. They may be put roundly at half-a-million or more years ago, just before the Ice Age. Man had already wandered from the south of Asia to England (which was then a part of the continent), and a fairly large population seems to have been scattered over the broad valley which is now the North Sea. The bones of the Ape-Man (*Pithecanthropus*) of Java best represent this early wave of human distribution: a squat, ugly, beetle-browed, brutal-jawed family, unclothed, and most probably devoid of speech.

Then we have the weapons which belong to the early part of the Old Stone Age (Palæolithic)—chiefly oval flints which have been chipped with another stone so as to form a "hand-axe" (a sort of stone chopper without handle). We have ample remains of the Neanderthal race which fashioned these implements, and the racial type is not disputed. Man was still a type of savage lower than the Australian black: a brutal-looking creature, about five feet three inches high on the average,

with massive jaws and sloping forehead and almost gorilla-like ridges over the eyes.

Sir Arthur Keith and a few other authorities hold that a higher race existed at the same time as this Neanderthal race. Their opinion is based upon very disputed reconstructions of the Piltdown and other skulls, and we will here confine ourselves to the plain evidence of the stone implements and undisputed remains. We have hundreds of thousands of implements of these early stages of the Old Stone Age. They probaby represent at least a hundred thousand years of human development, and they show only slow progress in the improvement of the weapons and implements.

We then reach a period (the Mousterian Period) of marked advance. The fashioning of the stone implements becomes much finer, and the number of types increases. There is a rudimentary artistic feeling in the prehistoric maker. There are also "hearths," which for the first time indicate that man has discovered the use of fire and that he is living in social groups.

This advance coincides unmistakably with the Ice Age. What we call the Ice Age was not one continuous period of ice and snow all the year round for half-a-million years or so. It is divided into four or five long periods of intense cold, with three or four relatively warm periods between them. Neanderthal man probably wandered over Europe during the first

warm "interglacial" period. The animals whose bones mingle with his are of the type that love a warm climate—warmer than ours to-day—and he probably wandered naked, in simple family groups, without homes of any kind, over southern and central Europe. The second ice-period came slowly on, and the men of Europe were now intelligent enough to meet it, instead of simply retreating to Africa. We find their remains in rock-shelters and caves. They have now "homes," "hearths," and a sort of clan-life.

A homely illustration may be given of this important effect of man's environment. Call to mind a large park or pleasant countryside on a Sunday afternoon in summer, when thousands of people are scattered, generally in couples or family groups, over a broad district. Then suppose that a sharp shower of rain comes on. At once the couples and little family groups are compelled to flock together, in crowds, under every available shelter. We may even, without pressing the analogy too far, notice how people who, had the rain not come on, would not have dreamed of speaking to each other, now talk freely under their common shelters. So the Neanderthal men were swept together by the Ice Age into the caves of southern Europe, to shelter from the inclement conditions, and the development of speech and rude social organization would naturally follow. "River drift man" had become "Cave man." Social life had begun. And from that point onward, in our prehistoric records, man makes faster progress.

But progress was still slow as compared with modern times. It would take a long time to develop articulate speech; and the struggle with frost-bound nature, summer and winter, was exacting. At last, as the animal bones show, the ice-sheet retreated. Men had a warmer climate, a more abundant diet, and we accordingly find a much better stone culture: very fine lance-heads, arrows, drills, saws, rough drawings on stone, tools made of bone and ivory.

This warm period ended in the most intense of the cold periods of the Ice Age and the largest extension of the sheet of ice and snow, which now covered Europe down to the valleys of the Thames and Danube. The reindeer and mammoth found the climate congenial to them as far south as the Pyrenees. I have, however, given the details about the Ice Age elsewhere, and must be content here with completing this broad outline.

The prehistoric men of Europe now entered into what is called the "Magdalenian Period," and the remains show great progress. Art was remarkably developed. Some of the line-drawings, on bone or stone, and of the carvings in ivory are admirable. Caverns in the north of Spain have their walls frescoed with animals for hundreds of yards—an evidence of the largeness of the community as well as of the advance of taste and intelligence. In another cavern we have found animal figures which seem to have been drawn for a magical purpose—as charms to cause the multiplication of the animals for food. Excellent bone needles

are found in the soil of the caverns, and we see that men now made clothing, though the *drawings* of men are always nude, which implies that skins were worn only on occasion. These drawings also show that man still, at the close of the Ice Age, had a thick coat of hair.

These artistic remains of the Cave Period are often exaggerated. I am describing them as I have seen them. Man was still a long way from civilization. He had no pottery, no metal, no writing, no agriculture, no building, no tame animals. His culture compares so well with that of the Eskimo that some have thought that the Eskimo are really the descendants of the Cave Men: that they followed the retreat of the ice northward. However, the path of progress was now fairly entered. The ice slowly disappeared, and presently we begin to find burned wheat (wild), cherry-stones, nutshells, and bones of the pig and ox in the caves. At last the Ice Age was quite over, and the greatly improved race emerged from the caverns and, on the now fertile plains of Europe, inaugurated the New Stone Age. The long childhood was over. The New Stone Age proved to be the nursery of civilization.

CHAPTER II

THE WONDERS OF ANCIENT CRETE

We have so far considered only part, and probably not the most important part, of the effect of the Ice Age on the prehistoric savage. It is doubtful whether the men of the New Stone Age in Europe—the men who now learned to till the ground, tame animals, build huts, weave, and so on—were the descendants of the Cave Men. Most authorities think that they came from Africa, and, with their superior weapons of polished stone and higher intelligence, partly exterminated and partly absorbed the older Europeans. These obscure questions do not concern us much in themselves, but it is essential to try to understand what was happening south of Europe while the Cave Men sat by their fires in the decorated caverns of the Pyrenees and slowly developed their grunts and gestures into articulate speech.

When the last and most severe ice-sheet spread, a large part of the inhabitants of Europe would undoubtedly go south with the sun. We have positive evidence that they did, and that there were occasional arrivals of higher types of men from Africa. At this

time Spain had a land-connection with Africa, and it is possible that there was also a land-bridge through Italy and Sicily. But the fertile country available in North Africa is only a comparatively narrow strip between the mountains (which would have a broad ice-sheet round them during the Ice Age) and the Mediterranean. Further south the vast barrier of the desert blocked the way from the Atlantic to the Red Sea. There would, therefore, be a relatively dense population in North Africa, with every inducement to social life and consequent progress.

But this was not the easiest line of retreat from Europe, and it is not the real line of the evolution of civilization. Until twenty years ago we thought that civilization developed first in Egypt and Mesopotamia, and that it was gradually brought from there to Europe. No one ever quite understood why it should have begun in the valleys of the Nile and the Euphrates, and a great deal of nonsense was talked about the superior "wisdom of the East." Since the year 1900, however, we have unearthed a most remarkable ancient civilization in Crete, and the story of the evolution of civilization begins to be beautifully intelligible.

The height of the ancient Cretan civilization is later than that of the Egytian or Babylonian, but there is now no doubt that it was an original development, giving as much to Egypt as it received from that country. We know also that this Cretan empire spread its civilization over a region almost as large as that of

Babylonia and Egypt. It had a great fleet on the Mediterranean. It founded cities (Troy, etc.) in Asia Minor and in Greece, and quite recently traces of its influence have been found in Sicily. We shall see presently that it was an advanced civilization, of a most interesting type, more than four thousand years ago.

In order to get the clue to this strange fact of civilization developing independently in three regions, all far removed from each other and all to the southeast of Europe, the reader would do well to glance at a map of the eastern end of the Mediterranean. It is quite clear that if, at the time of the Ice Age, the eastern end of the Mediterranean had been dry land, it would have been the most obvious and natural line of retreat for the "refugees" from Europe. Now, geologists have known for the last three decades that at least a large part of this end of the Mediterranean *was* dry land even at the close of the Ice Age. Professor Suess shows, in his famous geological work *The Face of the Earth*, that a very great deal of land has foundered in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Mr. Wells mentions in his *History* this swamping of part of the Eastern Mediterranean, and thinks that it was caused by the melting of the vast masses of ice at the close of the Ice Age. The level of the Atlantic Ocean would be considerably raised, he suggests, and it would burst through the rocky barrier (now the open Straits of Gibraltar) to the south of Spain and greatly extend the Mediterranean Sea. I cannot follow

this speculation very confidently, but it is, at all events, clear from the evidence in Professor Suess's book that a great deal of land foundered in the region of the Eastern Mediterranean after the close of the Ice Age. Hence during the last and most intense phase of the Ice Age there was much more land in this region. After carefully studying the geological indications of subsidence of land, I should say that there was continuous land, from Greece to Asia Minor and Palestine, if not to Egypt; and that probably a good deal of the Adriatic Sea was dry land.

It is hardly necessary to explain why we pay such close attention to geological considerations of this kind. They are of the very essence of the new and more scientific history of our day, and it is a proper regard for elements of this nature which makes the first part of Mr. Wells's *Outline* so valuable. In the present instance the tracing of this lost land enables us to understand the evolution of civilization far better than it was ever understood before.

The ice sheet or field of ice and snow which covered the greater part of Europe stretched from the Pyrenees to the Danube, with an extension south into Italy on account of the immense ice-sheet round the Alps. Probably the way south through Italy was entirely blocked by the massive glaciers which flowed from the Alps. From the Danube valley, however, the ice-sheet curved northward, instead of running across the south of Russia and Asia. It is, therefore, quite clear that

there would be two main lines of retreat for the men of the Old Stone Age as the climate of Europe grew colder. One line was across the south of Russia to the region of the Caspian Sea and to Asia. This seems to have been the route chosen by the ancestors of the "Aryan" peoples (who remained on the border of Asia, to the north of the Caspian) and of the Chinese, as we shall see later.

But the easiest and most attractive line of retreat would be through Austria and the Balkan lands to the warmer region which is now below the waves of the Eastern Mediterranean. No one who studies the conditions will doubt that during the most intense period of the Ice Age the men who had been for ages scattered over Europe gathered thickly at the eastern end of the Mediterranean. A continent was emptied into a comparatively small region. The Balkan Peninsula itself and Asia Minor, being mountainous, would be bleak, if not partly glaciated, during the Ice Age. The low-lying land to the south of Greece, of which Crete and the Greek islands are surviving fragments, would be by far the most attractive region within reach of the European refugees.

As the cold increased, and the region became congested, pioneers would push southward and eastward. There was still no agriculture, we must remember, and a large area was required for a population. A region easily became over-populated. And we have only to glance again at our map to see where the pioneers would

settle. Asia Minor generally was bleak and mountainous. Palestine was little better; and from the south of Palestine to Tunis stretched an almost continuous desert. There were only two promising lines of extension, as the pioneers would gradually learn. There was the narrow strip of very fertile valley along the banks of the Nile, and there was the equally fertile region which we now call Mesopotamia.

Thus we can complete the various discoveries which have been made in recent decades and blend them all in a satisfactory picture of the early evolution of civilization. Several decades ago it was realized that a mysterious "Mediterranean Race" began the story of civilization. We can surely now understand this race as the population of refugees from frozen Europe which packed the eastern end of the Mediterranean and, as it grew larger and the land began to founder, spread round the shores of the sea, from Italy to Egypt, and pushed on into the two available fertile valleys. The main body would remain on that lost land of which Crete is the largest surviving fragment. The mystery of the three contemporary, yet widely removed, ancient civilizations can hardly any longer be regarded as a mystery. The civilizations of Asia are much later than these, and we will in a subsequent chapter consider their origin.

We will take these three civilizations in succession, but for the moment we may still consider the Mediterranean race, which is at the root of all three, as a

whole, and see how it passes from the Old to the New Stone Age. The general effect of the concentration of the scattered Europeans in a relatively small area would be the same as that of the concentration of families in the caverns of Europe. It would lead to social life: to the formation of clans by the clinging together of families, and of tribes by the adhesion of clans. We must be very careful in attempting to trace this social evolution by the analogy of existing savages. They give us hardly any safe and consistent clue, and I will not attempt to go beyond this vague generalization. Social groups, eventually tribes, were formed, and chiefs were set up. So much we can infer from the earliest remains. Beyond that we can only say positively that woman had far more freedom and personality (as we shall find in Crete, Egypt, and Babylonia) than among the Aryan or the Semitic tribes, and that there is some ground to suspect a matriarchate.

But in this slight sketch we must confine ourselves to outline. In these "refugee regions," as we may call them (North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean), men worked their way out of the long Old Stone Age. The broad secret of human progress is, as we shall realize, contact or conflict of ideas, intercommunication, the pitting of wit against wit. The idea that conflict in the muscular and sanguinary sense is necessary is quite stupid. It is a narrow-minded inference from *animal* evolution. Obviously, it is the correct

process for developing animal qualities; but, just as obviously, for the promotion of human qualities we want a rivalry or friendly conflict of human powers—intelligence and idealism.

The closer concentration of population, owing to the conditions of the Ice Age in Europe and the geographical conditions in the south and east, brought about this beginning of social evolution. The Old Stone Age passed into the New Stone Age. Weapons and implements were no longer chipped and flaked. They were ground and polished. But the stone culture is the least important part of the Neolithic remains. Men now developed speech; and it looks as if written language, in a simple pictorial form (as we find among the Eskimo and Red Indians), was developed before the close of the New Stone Age. The dog, horse, pig, sheep, and ox were tamed. The secret of the reproduction of nutritious plants by seed was learned, and agriculture began. Clay pottery became common. There was a primitive sort of weaving. Houses of stone and wattle and mud were built.

We have ample remains of this New Stone Age, because, when the ice disappeared, men streamed over Europe, as far as Scandinavia and Scotland, from the south. But it is generally admitted that they brought their culture from the south, and we may regard the eastern region of the Mediterranean as the great laboratory for all the social and industrial creations of this busy age. Commerce also developed. The

amber or jet or highly-prized stone that belonged to a particular region would be bartered for corn or cattle or fine weapons. Trade-routes covered Europe. New tribes, which had been developing along different lines in Asia or on the Asiatic frontier, swept into Europe with fresh institutions. One wave of people from the east broke across central Europe as far as France and Britain, bringing with it the practice of raising large stone monuments over the dead or great stone circles (Stonehenge) and avenues in honour of the sun.

At last, apparently between 4,000 and 5,000 B.C., the use of metal was discovered. Copper was the first metal to occur to primitive man, but as early as 4,000 B.C. we find that he had learned (in Egypt and Babylonia, and possibly Crete) to make bronze. The details of this evolution must be read elsewhere. It is enough here to observe that each such new invention was a powerful stimulus to culture and commerce. But by this time what we call civilization had definitely begun, and we leave the general evolution of the central human group and take up, in succession, the three cradles of civilization.

We may take it that Crete was one of the chief centres of the region which is now lost under the waves of the Mediterranean. At what period the region generally was flooded we do not know, but it was most probably long before the beginning of civilization. The ancient Greeks had a legend—they tell us that they got it from Egypt—of a great civilization being swamped

by a mighty flood. Plato, who makes a sort of Utopian romance out of this fragment of legend, tells us that the lost civilization was out on the Atlantic Ocean, and even since his time scholars have been puzzled about this "lost Atlantis." We can say with confidence to-day that there never was a civilization lost in the Atlantic, or we should find some traces of its influence in prehistoric Britain or France. But if any student cares to study the various versions of the old legend carefully, he will find that the position of this "Atlantis" was not at all certain, and we are free to suppose that it is really a traditional reminiscence of the flooding of the Neolithic region in the Eastern Mediterranean. It was not yet civilized, but to some of the surrounding peoples, no doubt, its culture would seem very high.

We are strongly tempted to look here also for the origin of the myth of a "deluge." But the flood-story is mainly Babylonian. It was part of a romance that was very popular among the Babylonians thousands of years ago, and it was adopted into the Hebrew scriptures like so many other Babylonian legends. Floods were very familiar in ancient Babylonia, and perhaps the most natural view is that their story of a universal deluge, and of a specially favoured man escaping in a boat with his family, is merely a mythical dressing of some great flood that actually occurred in their region. If, however, the earliest founders of the Babylonian civilization were part of the Mediterranean Race—which is disputed—it is not impossible that their flood-

story is, like the Egyptian story which the Greeks converted into a "lost Atlantis," a swollen tradition of the swamping of a Neolithic people in the Mediterranean.

At all events, we know two things: first, that there has been a great foundering of land in that district since the Ice Age, and secondly that Crete was the centre of a Neolithic population about 10,000 B.C. The experts tell us that the settlers "probably came from Africa," but they do not take account of the geological catastrophe to which I have referred. It is more reasonable to suppose that the survivors from the foundering lands settled on the higher land which is now Crete. There, from about 10,000 to 3,000 B.C., they lived the life of the New Stone Age which we have described. About 3,000 B.C. they began to use metal,[1] and within a century or two they passed into the phase which scholars definitely call civilization.

The evolution of each early civilization is so gradual that nothing like a precise date can be given. There is merely a slow improvement of the culture until it reaches a stage that we choose to call civilized. Artistic pottery, for instance, is one of the most common tests; and the use of metal and the establishment of a settled kingdom are other marks on which archæologists fasten. But it is neither necessary nor possible here to go over the successive phases of each civilization. For

[1] The dates are still uncertain, and, as usual, I give moderate figures. Some would say 4,000 B.C. In any case, the rise of the Cretan civilization coincides with the rise of the first kings of Egypt.

Crete the reader may consult the works of Hall and Hawes and Baikie. Here we may confine ourselves to the more interesting features of the Cretan civilization once it was fully developed.

Some of those features proved so picturesque and surprising that they are already fairly well known to the general public. Our knowledge is very largely derived from the ruins of the palace of the Cretan kings at Knossos. It was destroyed and rebuilt more than once, but the best features belong to the Golden Age of Cretan art, about 1,500 B.C. The building itself was about 500 feet square, and several stories high; and in every detail it shows a rich and powerful and (as old empires go) well-ordered civilization. There were bath-rooms, with terra cotta baths, and a drainage system that astonished the excavators. When we remember that even London and Paris had no sewage systems in the days of Queen Elizabeth, we certainly should not expect such a thing in a forgotten civilization of 3,500 years ago. Yet experts tell us that the drains of this ancient palace were superior to anything known afterwards in history (even in ancient Rome) until the middle of the nineteenth century! The drains were of faucet-jointed pipes of quite a modern look, and so well made that they are serviceable to-day. Manholes were provided for the inspection of the main drains, and the surface water from the roof was brought in to flush the pipes. There were similar drains in another palace, at Phaestos; and the excellence of the engineering sug-

gests that such work had been done long before 1,500 B.C.

The discovery reminded scholars of another Greek legend, or series of legends. It was said that the first man who was able to fly, Daedalus, was a skilful engineer in the employment of the Cretan king. This man, Greek legend said, built a wonderful "labyrinth" for the king, and in it was kept a horrid monster, half man and half bull, called the "Minotaur" (or bull of King Minos). It was said that Minos exacted seven youths and seven maidens from the Athenians every nine years to sacrifice to this monster. We now see that the "labyrinth" was probably the wonderful palace we have unearthed. "Labrys" is an ancient word of that region for a double axe, and the sign of the double axe is found all over the palace. From the frescoes on the walls, moreover, we learn that bull-baiting was the favourite sport, and that maidens were trained for the "ring." It is not impossible that they were kidnapped from Greece (which was still in a state of barbarism), and that this was the source of the legend.

Some writers lay heavy stress on this bull-baiting as a proof that the ancient Cretans were, in spite of their high art, a brutal people. The real reason for this censure is that, apparently, religion did not count for nearly so much in the lives of the Cretans as in the lives of the Egyptians and Babylonians. No large temples or idols have been discovered. All that we find are small domestic shrines in the palaces and houses

and small sacred enclosures (not temples) in the towns. Small statuettes of goddesses also have been found, one with a dove as symbol and one with serpents. It is possible that both represent one goddess—the mistress of the air and the earth—and it is most probable that here we have the original mother-earth goddess, the great fertility-goddess of so many primitive peoples, whose worship remained deep rooted in the Greek and Asiatic world for ages. We find no trace of male gods (except one young man deity) or priests.

The Cretans probably had no more than this old nature-religion, and we can well believe that it led to very free ideas in regard to sex. I have seen copies of hundreds of seals from the ruins, and many of them are what would now be called "obscene." It is, however, mainly prejudice to say that this feature was associated with cruelty. The sport of the Cretans was not nearly so cruel as that of the Romans, or even of the modern Spaniards; to say nothing of the fact that bull-baiting was common in every town of England little more than a hundred years ago. The Cretan sport, to judge by the frescoes and statuettes, consisted mainly in avoiding the bull by vaulting over it when it rushed.

The frescoes on the palace walls, many of which are beautifully preserved, fully bear out this estimate of the ancient Cretans. Men and women of the most pleasant and graceful forms, magnificently clothed, still smile at us from the walls, and in many respects

look astonishingly modern. The women have low-necked bodices and richly flounced skirts reaching to the ground; and both men and women seem to have worn something in the nature of "corsets." At all events, the "wasp-waist" is the ordinary type. "Why, they are Parisians," a Frenchman exclaimed in astonishment, when he was taken to see these pictures, which were, he was told, at least 3,500 years old. They do at least suggest the free and joyous life of Provence in the days of the troubadours. Dancing girls in semi-transparent drapery and beautifully-formed youths with silver girdles, bearing gold-mounted silver cups, appear on other frescoes. An elaborate gaming-board, made of ivory, gold, rock crystal, and enamel, and apparently used for something like draughts or chess, was found in one place; and the cups and vases of gold and silver and faience display artistic skill of the highest order.

These palaces and the ruins of a royal villa give us an ample picture of court life. No scholar has yet been able to decipher the language of this ancient people, though we have plenty of inscriptions; and it is not improbably their alphabet which gave rise to that of later Europe. But the frescoes, statues, and works of art generally yield a sufficient picture of a peaceful and merry and refined life, in which woman seems to have been the equal of man. There are no war pictures, which are so abundant in Egypt and Babylonia. The great fleet of the Cretans defended the island-kingdom,

and there is no trace fortifications. But there seem to have been rival kings or princes at the two palaces, and it is plain that the great palace of Knossos was taken and destroyed. In the end, indeed, the whole civilization was wrecked by the Greeks, as we shall see presently.

Such courts suggest feudal monarchies of a powerful and fairly ancient character, but more recent exploration has added to our knowledge. The ruins of small towns have been excavated, and in these we get a glimpse of the life of the people. It seems to have been surprisingly good for so early a date. Even the houses of artisans—a full set of a carpenter's bronze tools was found in one—had sometimes six or eight rooms. Other houses, presumably those of the bourgeois, have double the number. The remains suggest a general comfort, and in the middle-class houses a high standard of refinement. These towns also belong to 3,500 years ago.

Small as Crete was, it spread its civilization far and wide over the region. As everybody knows, a German archæologist named Schliemann excavated fifty years ago the ruins of what was believed to be ancient Troy, and found the remains of seven cities in so many successive layers. In the second city from the bottom—a city belonging to about 4,000 years ago—he found an immense treasure of gold and silver ornaments and weapons. The Cretan civilization had spread to Asia Minor four thousand years ago. Later colonies of it

were found in Greece, and quite recently it has been traced in Sicily. It is, in fact, not improbable that the Etruscans, who preceded the Romans in Italy, were part of the same race or derived their civilization from it. A large part of the civilizing work in the Mediterranean which we used to attribute to the Phœnicians was really carried out by the Cretans.

About 1,400 B.C. the whole of this interesting civilization was laid in ruins. Palaces and towns were burned, and a great part of the population was driven from the island. Some scholars believe that the "Philistines" of Palestine were Cretans who abandoned the ruins of their kingdom. Who the destroyers were we have no historical record, though there is little doubt that they were mainly the early semi-barbarous Greeks from the mainland. But Crete had done its work. For nearly three thousand years the island-people had developed their civilization, and had scattered the seed on the mainland of Europe. Upon their ruin we shall, in a later chapter, find the Greeks building a new and more brilliant civilization.

CHAPTER III

THE WISDOM OF OLD EGYPT

More than ten years ago it seemed to me that the main principle of the evolution of civilization—of human progress, in other words—is conflict of cultures and minds. It is misleading to think that social life as such promotes progress. The oldest social animals in the world are corals and sponges, and they have remained corals and sponges for something over twenty million years. On the other hand, there is complete social life among the blacks of Australia or the Melanesians of New Guinea or the Hottentots of Africa, yet they have remained unprogressive for, perhaps, a quarter of a million years. Mere social contact, even with a power of intercommunication, is not enough. There must be a stimulating clash of ideas and ideals and habits.

This is not the place to study the psychology of this principle; though it is, I may remark, quite easy to work out. But any reader will find the story of man, as well as the present great diversity of peoples, more intelligible if he bears the principle in mind. Isolation (of an individual or a tribe) means stagnation; association with differing individuals or peoples

means progress. The scattered peoples of the earth have remained unprogressive. The advance which we call the evolution of civilization always occurs where the scattered peoples, with differing cultures, are drawn together. This explains how it is that even imperialistic and purely selfish expansions—military or commercial—at first do good; and before the end of this work we shall fully realize how "civilizing" expeditions of this sort (the "White Man's Burden," etc.) are a fallacious mixture of good and bad, and lead eventually to decay through warfare.

The reader will now understand that the remarkable increase of our knowledge of early civilization during the last twenty years has strongly confirmed this principle. We have searched the earth, and we are quite certain that civilization began in Crete, Egypt, and Babylonia. The Chinese civilization is at least a thousand years later than these; the Hindu later still; the American a comparatively modern development. And we have now linked together the three early centres as so many specially favourable spots in one region into which the frozen condition of Europe had poured a large and conflicting population. There is no longer any question of "genius of race" or any other mystical factor. It is a plain question of "the materialistic interpretation of history."

We saw that the Egyptian and Babylonian early civilization may be regarded as extensions or outgrowths—almost colonies—from the Mediterranean

region. It would not be difficult from the Mediterranean —that is to say, from the land which is now the eastern end of the Mediterranean—to discover Egypt. The beautifully fertile valley, with superb climate, which stretches along the banks of the Nile between two vast deserts, was only formed during the New Stone Age. The Nile made its way across the desert, and in time cut the broad channel which is now Egypt. Its soil is, as is well known, a deposit of Nile mud, and we can estimate that it does not go back beyond the New Stone Age. At that time the people of the Mediterranean region were developing agriculture, and this fertile and sheltered valley would prove one of the most valuable and desirable sites in the whole region.

We have evidence that men of the Old Stone Age lived on the rocky fringes of the desert overlooking Egypt. We find their Palæolithic implements. Then, in the lowest deposits reached by our excavators, we have evidence of a large Neolithic population covering the valley itself, from the Delta to the First Cataract, after the Ice Age and the Old Stone Age were over. This Neolithic population passes quite gradually, as in the case of Crete, into the state which we call civilization.

There has been a good deal of controversy as to the origin of these early Egyptians. Some think they came from the African lands to the west. Others trace them to Arabia, or even Mesopotamia; and others again bring them from the south. Now that this early period is

better known to us, there is a very general agreement that, in the main, they were a southern extension of the Mediterranean race. There are writers who think that the Cretans came from Egypt, because the common dress of the men in both cases was a simple loin-cloth. On the contrary, this is only one of many indications that they were the northern and southern wings of the large population which the Ice Age drove to the relatively pleasant region lying to the south-east of Europe.

But there are ample traces of a great mingling of populations in early Egypt, and this gives us the essential condition of progress—clash of peoples and cultures. All Egyptologists are agreed that the fertile valley—a strip of rich soil only a few miles wide between severe rocks and deserts—was for ages a battleground of conflicting peoples. The remarkable collection of gods and goddesses of ancient Egypt is proof enough of this. We saw that the Cretans had a simple nature-religion, with one great mother-goddess (mother-earth). No doubt they had also local spirits of the woods and streams, etc.; and there are faint traces of a young man god (probably the original of Adonis), though this may have been an importation. In Egypt, on the contrary, the number of deities was bewildering, and their animal forms are apt to surprise people who now visit museums. The most outrageous superstitions (gods with heads of animals) seem to have flourished together with a

superb art and a very high code of morals. It is a reflection of the early confusion of Egypt. The conservative power of religion is notorious. Even when the country was brought under one monarch, it was impossible to suppress the ancient superstitions (each of which had its priests), and the Egyptian religion was made to embrace a whole pantheon of gods and goddesses. The more stupid features were, of course, confined to the workers, who were kept in ignorance.

The unification of Egypt was a long and slow development. A country which is only a few miles wide and several hundred miles long would, in those days of difficult communication, not easily be wrought into a political unity. People in the south, with a strong mixture of African blood, would scarcely understand people in the north. On the usual lines of political development, however, local chiefs absorbed their less powerful neighbours, and became petty kings. By 4,500 B.C. Egypt was divided among a number of these small kings.[1] By 4,000 B.C. the country was divided into only two kingdoms, Upper and Lower Egypt; and about 3,500 B.C. was founded the first dynasty of the rulers of all Egypt, with Memphis as their capital.

This little sketch does not propose to tell the exploits of kings, and it will be as little as possible decorated with their august and unpronounceable names. I am telling the flow of peoples, the shaping of institutions,

[1] The dates are, of course, disputed. Some would make this date 6,000 B.C. Where I give dates I am following the very moderate chronology of Professor Breasted.

the unsteady rise of ideals from one age to another. It is enough to say that during this long process of unification the people passed slowly out of Neolithic "barbarism" into a simple civilization. The mass of the people, indeed, altered little, as it was not in the interests of their pastors and masters to alter them. From the remains we get a sufficient picture of the people six or seven thousand years ago. They dwelt in mud huts (as many still do), and irrigated and cultivated the soil; and there was a "boss" to each village, who was supposed to see to the irrigation trenches and levy so many baskets of corn from each hut for the higher authorities. He scratched a basket and a number of strokes (the number of baskets due) on the hut; which may have been the origin of their picture-writing. The priests were just as much interested in keeping them as they were, and so the hawk-headed and cattle-headed deities and sacred cats, and so on, of the older days were kept alive.

But the type of pottery steadily improved, and there were carvings in bone and ivory, and the picture-writing developed, and gold and copper ornaments appeared. We may call Egypt "civilized" from about 3,500 B.C.; but the advance was very slow and gradual, and any date we care to assign is arbitrary. It is better for us to pass on to the age of the pyramids and see what the civilization of Egypt had become by about 3,000 B.C.

The pyramids, the appearance of which is now

familiar all over the world, are enduring monuments both of the wisdom and the folly of old Egypt. The early kings soon began to raise these massive pyramids of stone for the housing of their dead bodies. It is one of the distinctions of the Egyptian civilization that the people had a most intense belief in and concern about their life after death. The belief itself is, of course, hundreds of thousands of years old—older than the belief in gods; but in most civilizations we shall find it growing dimmer as the culture rises. In Egypt, on the contrary, it remained very vivid, and was a fundamental element in the lives of people and princes.

In the course of time the richer Egyptians came to believe that even the body had to be cared for after death. It was mummified, and precious ornaments and even furniture were buried with it. The rifling of tombs became a common crime, and kings built these immense stone structures to preserve their remains from desecration. The Sphinx, which is generally seen with the great pyramids, was carved much later—some say a thousand years later. It is believed to be a sort of guardian of the royal and noble cemetery which it overlooked, scaring away the evil spirits from the homes of the dead.

These pyramids show the power and wisdom of Egypt in their construction. The largest of them is estimated to have contained no less than 2,300,000 blocks of stone, of an average weight of two and a-half tons. Modern scholars scout the idea that some

lost art of engineering must be supposed to account for the work. The blocks must have been pushed and pulled up inclined planes of earth, and it is calculated that it would take 100,000 men twenty years to build the largest pyramid. In this, as well as in the remarkable skill of construction, we have undoubted proof of the existence, five thousand years ago, of a powerful and advanced civilization.

But the great pyramid is no less a monument of folly—of vanity in kings and of a feudal condition of the people. That the people could not help their condition it is unnecessary to say. I mean that such monuments show the weakness as well as the strength of the old civilization. They were feudal monarchies of the most despotic type, in which the last thing to be considered was the advancement of the people. Near one of the pyramids was found a wooden statue of a man with a staff in his hand, and Egyptologists are agreed that it goes back to the pyramid age, about five thousand years ago. It represents a strong man of a vulgar, bullying type; and the experts agree that it is probably a portrait-statue of the "boss" of one of the gangs of men who were compelled to labour on the pyramid. The amusing—or pathetic—feature is that the statue so closely resembled a village "boss" of the nineteenth century in that very district that the native workers at once hailed it as a portrait of him! So little had workers and foremen changed in the course of five thousand years of "civilization."

We must not, however, judge Egypt too narrowly by our modern standards, which are the outcome of so many thousands of years of experience. The civilization of Egypt 3,000 B.C. was in most respects better than the civilization of Europe a thousand years ago. The great art of our Middle Ages had not begun a thousand years ago, we must remember, whereas there was wonderful art in Egypt in the age of the pyramids. Portrait-statues, like the one described above, were very numerous and artistic. It was believed that a man had a "double" as well as a body and a soul. This double lived with the mummy in the tomb and might wander at night, so a perfectly faithful statue of the dead man or woman, in wood or stone, with life-like eyes of crystal or enamel, was buried with the mummy in order that the returning "double" might make no mistake. The art displayed in these statues is of a very high order, and the types of character are often just as good. We have a statue of a noble, Ra-hotep, and his wife, Nefert ("the Beautiful"), of about the year 3,000 B.C. When we remember that these statues had to be strictly faithful portraits, we recognize that the standard of character was high and refined.

We have other proofs that from four to five thousand years ago the standard of character was much as it is to-day. On the tombs there are hieroglyphic inscriptions which show that the Egyptian sacred book, *The Book of the Dead*, already existed. Most of it is a rambling and absurd account of

the wandering of the soul, but Chapter CXXV (in Budge's translation) tells us the ethical standards of the ancient Egyptians. They believed that immediately after death the soul was brought before the god Osiris to be judged. The heart of the dead man was weighed against a feather; at least, so it is represented in the symbolical pictures, to show how severe the judgement would be. I need quote only a few sentences from the "protestations" of the soul in order to illustrate the strictness of the moral standard five thousand years ago:—

> I have not oppressed the members of my family; I have not wrought evil in the place of right and truth . . . I have not made it the first consideration of each day that excessive labour should be performed for me. I have not ill-treated servants. I have not caused pain. I have made no man suffer hunger. I have made no one weep. I have not inflicted pain upon mankind . . . I have not committed fornication . . . I am pure. I am pure. I am pure. I am pure.

It will be noticed that—contrary to the opinion of so many people—there was the same standard of sexual asceticism five thousand years ago as there is in our own time; and it was put under the express care and sanction of the divine judge. But there was, apparently, far more stress on the duty to avoid inflicting pain or injury—the real essence of moral law—than in any ethical code until recent times. And

we have further discovered a moral treatise ("The Maxims of Ptah-Hotep") belonging to those ancient days, and numbers of inscriptions on private tombs, which show the same standard of character. A quite modern moral idealism was spread throughout Egypt five thousand years ago.

I may add that woman, in particular, was treated with complete respect and justice. She was the equal and companion of man. Some are surprised that in ancient Egypt men were free to marry their sisters. That is not a question of morals, but of national health; and it seems rather absurd to attempt to prove that it leads to decay when Egypt, where it was most common, is the longest-lived civilization that was ever on the earth.

This fine old civilization in the very dawn of historic time kept its strength and dignity and refinement for about a thousand years. Then there were two centuries of decay and confusion until, about the year 2,000 B.C., a new dynasty of kings, with Thebes for their capital, restored the prosperity of the country. Art took on new forms. Large temples, obelisks, and colossal statues of kings were raised. Furniture and chariots blazed with crimson and blue and gold. Beautiful ivories and scarabs and gold-work are found among the dust. Fine paintings appear on the buried walls. But the political system was still feudal, and the mass of the people toiled on as they had done two thousand years earlier, happy in their beer and wine and numerous

festivals, and in the glorious sunshine of their country.

About 1,800 B.C. the land was invaded by powerful marauders who have long been known as the Hyksos, or Shepherd Kings. They had horses (which were unknown in Egypt) and chariots, and made themselves kings of Egypt. The mystery has been fairly cleared up by modern scholars. The invaders were probably Syrians and Canaanites. We saw in the last chapter how the first waves of northern barbarism were pouring into Greece, and how they destroyed the Cretan civilization. Other branches of the Indo-Europeans overflowed into Syria, driving the Syrians and Canaanites over the Egyptian border. They ruled Egypt about two centuries, and then the normal development of the civilization was resumed.

Again we need not follow the story in detail; but there was a remarkable development in the fourteenth century that we must notice. After the expulsion of the Hyksos the country grew more wealthy and powerful than ever. The royal armies went far and wide over the world, and commerce "followed the flag," as is said in modern times. The period is compared to the age of Louis XIV of France, one of the most brilliant periods in the history of France. We shall see presently that this beginning of Egyptian imperialism on a large scale was also the beginning of an element of decay; but at the time, as is usual, men saw only a splendour and artistic richness that concealed the seeds of disease which were silently dropped into the soil.

At this time, shortly before 1,400 B.C., the king was Amenhetep III. His wife, Queen Tii, seems to have been the Elizabeth or Catherine of the Egyptian line, and the strength of her intellect and character led to a curious development. She was partly of foreign extraction, and she seems to have resented the stupid-looking idols of animal-headed deities which disfigured the civilization. Powerful as she was, she could not alter this; but she gave such education to her son Amenhetep IV that he tried to suppress polytheism altogether. He was a quiet scholar and artist, yet he braved the rival priesthoods, and decreed that one god only, "the Lord of the Disk," should henceforward be worshipped in Egypt. The solar disk was to him, of course, only an emblem of the deity. The religion he tried to impose on Egypt was a purely spiritual and ethical monotheism.

Thus monotheism was officially proclaimed in Egypt five hundred years before a single prophet arose in Israel or a line of the Old Testament was written. The character of the new cult may be gathered from the "Hymn to Amon-Ra," which has been discovered, and from which I may quote a few verses:——

> Praise be to thee, Ra, Lord of Right, whose holiness is hidden . . Thou alone art he that created whatsoever is; men came forth from thine eye, and the gods from out of thy mouth. Thou art he that did create green herbs for the cattle and fruit-bearing trees for men; who giveth a liveli-

> hood to the fishes in the rivers and the birds under the heavens; who lendeth breath to the creature that is still within the egg, and nourisheth the son of the worm; that giveth life to the flies as well as to the worms and the fleas.

Thus is the doctrine of creation, providence, and supreme and universal father plainly set out in the fourteenth century before Christ. There is in this hymn a reference to other gods—the stubborn ancient deities, with strong priesthoods, that it was so difficult to suppress. They were therefore made subordinate to the supreme deity, as in parts of the Old Testament. But in his *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians* (1905) Professor Steindorff quotes other hymns and prayers which were purely monotheistic. "Thou art the one god that hath no equal," says one.

But Amenhetep IV was worn out by his struggle with the conservative priests. He died young, and the religious condition of the country returned to its old state. Art passed once more under the control of the priests, and degenerated. By this time, however, some of the finest temples of Egypt had been reared. The visitor to Egypt to-day is most of all impressed by the remains of its solid and stately temples, and feels that they convey to him something of the severe dignity and strong religious sentiment of the ancient people. In point of fact they nearly all belong to the last section of Egyptian history. The great temple at Luxor dates from about 1,400 B.C.,

and most of the other notable temples are far later. Egypt was, when the best of them were built, entering upon its decline. After the death of the reformer Amenhetep IV (in 1358 B.C.) there followed a century and a-half of mediocrity and stagnation, and then six centuries of decay and disorganization. There was a period of recovery from 663 to 525 B.C., and fine new temples were raised, but the old spirit of Egypt was exhausted. The stage of the world was occupied by sturdy new powers—Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, and finally Romans—who were to carry on the work of civilization.

There is no such thing as a natural exhaustion, a natural old age, of nations. That is an historical fallacy that often conceals a most important truth. We shall see in the case of every great civilization noticed in this little work that the last phase was not due to any internal law of decay. The catastrophe was in every case brought on by warfare, imperialist expansion and its inevitable recoil, and unsound economic conditions. As we saw, Egypt became a conquering nation on a large scale about 1,500 B.C. There were "glorious triumphs." Whole countries were annexed. But the strength of the nation was poured out on foreign soil, and, as it weakened, the foreigner appeared inevitably in Egypt to demand his revenge. At the same time the wealth got by conquest abroad really weakened the economic life of the country—which was always elementary—and the end was inexorable.

Yet Egypt had played a fine part in the evolution of civilization. On the tombs of governors and officials who died nearly five thousand years ago we repeatedly find such epitaphs as: "He gave bread to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, and clothed the naked." Probably he did not; but these things show that the ideals on which Europe would pride itself ages afterwards were familiar in the early dawn of history. In its later days, in fact, Egyptian religion went beyond this plain moral code and preached an asceticism like that of our Middle Ages. The worship of Isis was particularly associated with female continence, and there were large monasteries of men. Thus even the ascetic excesses of Europe were anticipated. But these were the days of decay. In its long prime Egypt was a land of sober idealism. It had—especially when imperial expansion began—many slaves; it had no education for the mass of the people; it retained its feudalism and autocracy to the end. These things one expects in the earliest civilizations. In other respects the story of Egypt is itself a fair outline of the evolution of civilization during five thousand years.

CHAPTER IV

BY THE RIVERS OF BABYLON

THE civilization of Crete had been lost entirely to the world for more than two thousand years. Even in Greek literature the few references to it were so clearly exaggerated and legendary that no serious notice was taken of them until the excavations began in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The Egyptian civilization could not be so easily forgotten. Not only did the Greeks plainly acknowledge that their early wise men had wandered in Egypt and found it a land of ancient learning, but the Old Testament itself bore witness to the fact; and the stately temples and pyramids still rose high above the soil for every traveller to behold.

Yet Babylon was, until recent times, the chief representative of the older era—the world "before Christ," as we say. Not a single trace of the cities of Babylonia and Assyria remained. Certain shapeless mounds that rose above the monotonous desolation of Mesopotamia were believed to mark their sites, but there was nothing in the least like the beautiful ruins of old Egypt. In spite of all this, "ancient Babylon" was

known by repute all over the earth, and it stood as a type and symbol of the ancient world—rich, powerful, wise in its way, but very wicked, very elementary in its morals and religion.

A Greek historian had left us a description of ancient Babylon that filled every reader with amazement, if not incredulity. Yet even this historian, Herodotus, had described the Babylonians as so low in moral culture that, he said, every woman had to go to a temple to be violated before she could be married, and one might see groups of the less favoured women pestering strangers at the doors. This agreed very well with what the Jews had recorded in their sacred book, and so Babylon was notorious as the great city of the unredeemed world, the world that "lay in darkness and the shadow of death."

Modern history and archæology have made an end of these world-wide calumnies. We have uncovered the mounds of Mesopotamia and pierced to their depths. In ancient Babylonia there was no stone. Temples, palaces, and cities were masses of brick, and so they had in large part crumbled or fused into crude masses of earth; though we shall see that the walls, and even houses, of ancient Babylon are preserved to a remarkable extent. But, while the buildings of the old civilization were so perishable, its literature—written on clay baked into stone—is the least perishable in the world, and hundreds of thousands of documents (or fragments of such) were found in the ruins. Folk-

lore, romances, temple prayers and psalms, marriage contracts, commercial deeds and letters, even ordinary domestic correspondence, can be read to-day as they were four thousand years ago. We thus have a remarkably intimate knowledge of the ancient people, and, instead of the kind of thing suggested by Hebrew legend, we find a science, an art, a gravity and sobriety of character, and a moral and social idealism of the most admirable and advanced description.

In such a work as this it is necessary to refer sometimes to Mr. H. G. Wells's *Outline of History*. It is a masterpiece of historical writing on the broader scale. No previous "history of the world" can compare with it—in spite of the reputation of the authors as professional historians—in grasp of the real conditions of the procession of history and in breadth of vision.

But among the errors which inevitably occur, as Mr. Wells freely acknowledges, there is one of grave importance which this little sketch may help to correct. In his eagerness to avoid the bias which his Rationalist views might give, and do full justice to Christianity, Mr. Wells has run to the other extreme. He has fallen under the influence of the old fairy tale of a world lying in darkness and the shadow of death before Christ came. He is quite unjust to the ancient civilizations, particularly Babylonia, Greece, and Rome. He makes the singular mistake of repeating that there was no "God of righteousness" until Hebrew and Christian literature appeared, and he omits some of the finest

features of the older civilizations. He would say that this is only a question of difference of estimate between himself and me—certainly he is the last man to be accused of prejudice—but the reader may find that the facts given here in regard to the ancient empires and republics make a material difference in the story of mankind.

For my purpose it is enough almost to confine myself to two points: the origin of each civilization and the height of culture which it reached. The actual course of evolution is much the same in all cases, with those picturesque shades of difference, of national complexion, which the circumstances give in each case. The Neolithic culture—pottery, agriculture, weaving, housing, etc.—steadily improves. The strong men of small groups become chiefs of larger groups, and eventually kings of countries. Stone is superseded by bronze, and bronze by iron. Picture-writing evolves into an alphabet, and thus provides a very effective means of communication. Definite weights and measures are created, and commerce improves. We roughly date the beginning of civilization in each case when metal supersedes stone, kings absorb a large number of chiefdoms, written documents begin, and men gather into cities. It means merely that the steadily advancing culture has reached a certain height to which we choose to give the name "civilization."

The first task in such a work as this is to bring the Babylonian civilization into relation with the Cretan

and Egyptian as part of the general advance of culture in that part of the world. In the case of Babylonia this is difficult and it is not in the least my intention in this work to indulge in personal speculation. I am trying to let the reader of little leisure know what modern scholars have discovered in this very interesting field of archæology and early history, and showing how, when we put it all together, we get a most instructive picture of the evolution of the race.

If the reader will again look at a good map, he will see the difficulty of bringing Babylonia into line with the other early civilizations. Egypt was very easy to discover from the Mediterranean region. Mesopotamia is not. We may, however, suppose that an extension was possible along the comparatively low land to the north of Palestine, which leads to the Mesopotamian plain. That was the great commercial route *from* Babylon in later days.

The more serious difficulty is that scholars are not at all agreed as to who the earliest founders of the civilization were, and where they came from. The earliest cities, such as Ur and Eridu, are the farthest removed from the Mediterranean. Their sites are now a long distance from the Persian Gulf, but seven thousand years ago they were coast-cities. Most of the experts say that a strange people called the Sumerians came down from the mountains in the north-east, built these and other cities, drained the marshes, and founded the Babylonian civilization. The Semites

later mingled with the Sumerians—though a few high authorities believe the Semites were there first—and took over the civilization. At all events, we have the clearest traces of the two peoples—the bearded, large-nosed Semites and the beardless, rather Mongolian-looking Sumerians—on the early monuments, and it is generally agreed that the Sumerians were the first great engineers and builders of cities.

But how these Sumerians are related to the rest of humanity is not clear. Hall believes that they came from the region of India. Others relate them to the Turkish peoples of central Asia. Others (though this is a less favoured view than it used to be) connect them with the early Chinese. Professor Elliot Smith regards them as the eastern wing of the Mediterranean race, as I have represented them in the preceding chapters.

If we carefully consider a map, and reflect what would be *likely* to happen during the Ice Age, we see that these differences are not as serious as they appear to be. We suppose that the scattered population was driven south-eastwards from Europe. But the region to the north of the Black Sea and round the Caspian was not covered by the ice-sheet, and there would be a retreat of Europeans along this line. In the Caucasic regions, it is supposed, the ancestors of the "Aryans" developed. They spread in time partly to the north (the ancestors of the Slavs, Teutons, Greeks, and Romans) and partly to Asia Minor (the ancestors

of the Hindus and Persians, who were one people until the third millennium B.C.). Further south would be the great pool of the Semitic peoples, which sent streams into Babylonia, Arabia, and Syria. Further east, beyond the Caspian, would be another human centre, from which a branch would in time pass across Asia to China, and another branch may have gone south, across Persia, to Mesopotamia.

In this way we get a general idea how each civilization may be related to the crowding together of the race, to the east of the Mediterranean, on account of the glacial condition of Europe. Our knowledge on this point is, however, very imperfect, and we leave it open whether the Sumerians were a branch of the Mediterranean race which followed the route from (on the modern map) Aleppo to Baghdad, or whether they came from beyond the Caspian and were related to the early Mongolians.

What is clear is that by at least 3,000 B.C. (some say 4,000 B.C.) a fair civilization, with many cities and rulers, existed in Babylonia. At that early date Babylon itself was an insignificant place up river. The region was, like early Egypt, divided into petty princedoms, or city states, a large number of which seem to have been ruled by priests. The remains show that they were fully entitled to be called "civilized," as we use the word. They had political organization of the royal type, large settled cities, fine pottery, an advanced agriculture (with irrigation and draining of the

marshes), and a written language. Their "cuneiform" (wedge-shaped) writing is now well known, and its peculiarity is understood. At first, like the Egyptians and Chinese, they simply drew pictures of the objects or actions they wished to express. Indian picture-writing in North America shows us how mere drawings of this kind can be made to communicate quite elaborate messages. These early picture-signs survive in the Egyptian hieroglyphics (though there each has become a syllable, a conventional sign for a sound), and are easily traced in the oldest Chinese characters. As the Sumerians took to writing on clay tablets (which were then baked), the picture of the object became a few jabs with the slender, four-sided piece of wood which they used as a "pencil," and the sign became a syllable for making longer words.

Other early remains show that five thousand years ago the Sumerians were keeping pace with the Cretans and Egyptians. There is a marble statue of a King Daudu (David) of considerable merit; and in the same ruin were found traces of drains which suggest sanitary engineering, if not baths, such as must have preceded the elaborate baths and drains of the Cretan palace. There is a sculptured votive tablet representing the victories of one of the priest-kings of Lagash. Another priest-ruler of the same city, Gudea, had nine statues of himself carved in diorite, a stone that must have been brought from a great distance; and there is other evidence that his palace was adorned with cedar from

Syria, gold from Arabia, and fine vases, reliefs, and bronzes. In short, between 3,000 and 2,500 B.C. (the most moderate dates) there was a good civilization spread over what we now call Mesopotamia.

But it was divided among a score of princedoms, and there was the inevitable drawback of war and pillage and exhaustion. We can trace a thousand years of this sort of confusion, science and art and idealism struggling upward under the constant difficulties of war and destruction and impoverishment. In one respect, of course, the situation was favourable to progress. It gave, within narrow frontiers, a dozen different States and cultures competing with and stimulating each other. But it was too early an age for men to see that a peaceful unification, with friendly rivalry in culture, was the best policy, and further progress had to come out of the ambitious schemes of imperialist "conquerors."

At last, about 2,700 B.C., we get a "King of the Universe"; that is to say, an aggressive monarch named Sargon, who has united nearly all Mesopotamia under his rule. We have no illusions to-day about the "glory" of these conquerors, but we recognize the good that came of unification. We have recovered a beautiful relief in stone, carved in honour of the victories of Sargon's son, and it shows that art—one of the chief pulses of civilization—reached a high stage of perfection.

The early kingdom, however, paid the price of its

bloody methods. It became weak, and was shattered; and small kings continued for centuries to enrich themselves and retard the pace of progress. About 2,300 B.C. Semitic invaders took the small town of Babylon, and their successive encroachments upon their neighbours made Babylonia a large State, Babylon a leading city, and the Babylonian god Marduk *the* god of the universe.

This development reached its height under King Hammurabi, about the year 2,100 B.C.; and we may rest here for a moment to examine the height that Babylonian civilization had reached by that time. Hammurabi's father, though he had made a few conquests, had generally enjoyed peace during his twenty years' reign, and had done solid work for his kingdom. Hammurabi himself, a strong man of the Napoleonic type, very greatly enlarged the kingdom. But, like Napoleon, he had a large constructive mind as well as a very large ambition for conquering, and he set about the organization of the State. One historian calls him "the first great organizer in history."

One of the greatest services that Hammurabi rendered to his fellows was to unify and gather into a code all the old laws of the region—a service which again reminds us of Napoleon and his famous code. This was, it happens, a high service to modern history, for we have discovered a copy of the laws, cut in a large block of stone, and they would suffice of themselves to settle the old calumnies against

Babylon. Mr. Chilperic Edwards's translation of this most interesting code of laws, with valuable notes on the application to the morals of Babylon and the derivation of the Hebrew law from the Babylonian, ought to be read by every one who is interested in the evolution of civilization;[1] but no doubt there are many who have not read it, and a very slight survey of the code may be made here.

It is chiefly remarkable for its deep and pervading concern for justice. That, some one may say, is supposed to be the object of law; but one must remember that we are dealing with a despotic oriental monarchy of four thousand years ago. A modern worker, at all events, will learn with surprise that in this most ancient code a minimum wage is fixed for every worker in the kingdom. Nearly a fifth of the code is taken up with this concern for the workers. Another long series of clauses deals with the rights of woman, and they are remarkably just. Woman had as good a legal and social position in Babylon as she had in Egypt; far better than she has had anywhere in Europe until the end of the nineteenth century. She had, in the law, her own property and equal right of divorce with the husband.

More interesting still is the zeal of the old law against sexual immorality. Here it becomes positively savage, and is, no doubt, a very old law surviving from pre-civilized days. But apparently Hammurabi

[1] *The Hammurabi Code and the Sinaitic Legislation.*

has to sustain these laws, with certain modifications, in the height of Babylonian civilization, and they will be read with astonishment by those who have always thought of Babylon as, in Biblical language, "the whore." The sentence for adultery—which is now not punished in any civilization in the world—was death. Both man and woman were to be drowned; unless—this is, apparently, a humane modification—the king pardons the man, and the husband pardons the wife. In any case, adultery was a statutory crime, punishable with death. For rape the sentence is death. For incest the offenders were burned alive. A priestess who entered a wine-shop was burned alive. A married woman who was merely suspected, or charged by gossip, with adultery had to purge herself by ordeal.

This state of things, in the height of Babylonian civilization, is a surprising contrast to the traditional idea of Babylon.[1] Other documents which we have recovered entirely confirm the code. We have large numbers of marriage contracts, and in these the chastity of the bride is quite commonly stipulated. We have the lists of sins which were presented by

[1] It is equally surprising how some people receive new discoveries. In his apologetic work *In Defence* Sir Robert Anderson refers to the discovery of the Hammurabi Code as "undermining the foundations of the critical hypothesis." He entirely ignores the facts I have given above, and merely exults over the supposed fact that "Hammurabi" is the Biblical "Amraphel"—which competent Assyriologists declare to be nonsense.

the priests in the temple to those who came to invoke the favour of the gods—for misfortune was strictly regarded as a visitation for sin—and unchastity is classed as one of the worst. We have the hymns and psalms used in the temples, and we see that even the goddess Ishtar—the wicked "Astarte" of the Old Testament—was regarded as a goddess of righteousness, and particularly sexual righteousness. "The fervent prayer of him who has sinned do thou accept," says one of these prayers to Astarte, the "all-powerful mistress of mankind," the "Queen of Heaven." The whole temple-liturgy groans with acknowledgment of "sin" and prayer for "mercy"; and both Marduk and Shamash, the chief gods, are addressed essentially as gods of righteousness, visiting the sins of men with illness and misfortune. In the course of time Marduk became practically the one god of the Babylonians, and the prayers to him have an extraordinarily modern tone.

The particular statement of the Greek historian Herodotus, that women had to be violated in the temples before marriage, is shown by the marriage-contracts and the whole literature to be nonsense. The priestesses mentioned in the Hammurabi Code are mostly described as married women, and they are jealously guarded in their reputation. As I said, they incurred capital punishment by entering a wine-shop. There is only one caste of priestess noticed in the Code ("wives of Marduk") who *may* have been sacred

prostitutes in some of the old provincial temples, where pre-historic superstitions about fertility lingered. In the height of Babylonian civilization there was the same ideal of sex-relations as in a modern Anglo-Saxon civilization, and there is not a scrap of positive evidence to show that the practice was different.

I have dwelt at some length—though these are only scanty references to an immense Babylonian literature—on this point because the old legends about Babylon still survive even among educated people. The Babylonians differed very considerably from the Egyptians on one point—they regarded life after death as a dim unknown region about which they did not trouble themselves. On the other hand, however, they regarded *this* world as full of evil spirits, tempting and afflicting mankind, and they very strictly believed that earthly ills were sent or permitted by the gods for moral transgressions. The moral sanction was, therefore, a very severe and very real one to the Babylonians, and it would be at least as effective as punishment after death (which might be bought off by repentance).

Here one is reminded at once of the Hebrews of the Old Testament, and it is now well known that the Hebrew culture was mainly derived from Babylon, as we shall see later. In Babylon, however, the legends which appear in *Genesis* were not part of a sacred book. The story of the flood, for instance, was part of a very old romance, of which some copies go back to 2,000 B.C.

It is quite plainly the source of the Hebrew story. Ut-Napishtim was warned by the gods that men were to be destroyed for their sins, and he built a boat in which he and his family and the animals escaped. The story tells how he sent out in succession a dove, a swallow, and a raven; and how at last the boat rested on the top of a mountain, and he came out and offered sacrifice. Other tablets describe the stages of creation as in *Genesis* (modified, as we shall see), the garden of immortality ("Eden" is merely the old Sumerian word for "the plain"), the command not to eat certain fruit, the transgression and fall, and so on. Sacred trees are very common on Babylonian seals, and a man, woman and serpent often stand beside the tree.

But it would take a large volume to tell all that we now know about the religion, morality, and folk-lore of Babylon. Side by side with these popular tales the learned Babylonians—mainly the priests, no doubt—were developing a very promising science. They had elementary mathematics (square and cube roots and fractions) and a remarkably good astronomy, as far as naked-eye observation will go. Some of the great temples ran to a height of 300 feet. They were built in seven stages—a black (lowest) stage in honour of Saturn, an orange stage in honour of Jupiter, a blood-red stage for Mars, a gold-plated stage for the Sun, a yellow stage for Venus, a blue stage for Mercury, and a silver stage for the moon. These reflected the seven chief heavenly bodies, which were observed assiduously

from the summits; and they have given the week of seven days to late civilization. Saturn's day, the Sabbath, was a day of rest. Libraries were very large and numerous, and women were educated as well as men.

Art was still more developed. The shortage of stone restricted sculpture and architecture, but the carved gems, seals, the fine pottery, the gold and silver and bronze work, were of the highest order. The great temples and palaces were necessarily of brick, but the Babylonians were very skilful in the manufacture of glazed and coloured bricks and tiles, and the city was gay and beautiful. The city of which we have now uncovered the remains belongs to a late date (about 680-70 B.C.), but it reproduced the earlier Babylon destroyed by the Assyrians. The walls, about twelve miles in length, were eighty-five feet thick and 300 feet high. Two chariots could have galloped abreast on top of the walls. One of the gates, the Ishtar Gate, is well preserved, and we see that the walls were decorated with immense bulls and dragons in coloured tiles. The whole of the great buildings seem to have been faced with glazed and coloured tiles, with decorative figures; and at the summit of the temples were little shrines with massive gold statues and furniture.

These are but a few fragments of the very large knowledge we now have of ancient Babylon, its culture and its people between 2,000 and 1,000 B.C. The really amazing thing to any man who carefully studies its

life and ideals, instead of dissipating his attention over the uncouth names of its kings and their battles (which is usually given as history), is that four thousand years later the world had made so little progress. If we take the end of the eighteenth century of the Christian Era, before modern science and the democratic movement had begun to change the face of the world, we should have to say that the advance, in most respects, beyond the Babylonian civilization was astonishingly poor for so prolonged a period.

The explanation lies, of course, in the inevitable price of imperial expansion—war, exhaustion, and then the revenge of the conquered. It is the usual story in every case. Ambitious kings extended their frontiers further and further. Up to a point this was—apart from its moral aspect—useful to the race. It meant a concentration of wealth, which led to great advances of culture; and this culture was then conveyed over the world by the Babylonian armies and merchants. From Persia to Syria backward peoples were awakened from barbarism, and entered upon the paths of civilization. But a few centuries of this sort of "civilizing" bring a reaction. The conquering power exhausts its people; the subject races unite and rend it. As early as 1,900 B. C. the Hittites took and plundered Babylon. It was, however, still strong enough to recover, and it dragged out its story of advancing culture (particularly ethical and religous) and decaying power (through war) to 689 B.C., when the Assyrians destroyed the great city

and its empire. As we have said, the city was superbly rebuilt by the Assyrian king Nebuchadnezzar—the fine monarch who is known to many only in an absurd legend that he ate grass among the cattle—and there was a last flicker of art and culture. Then came the turn of Persia to expand, and Babylonia slowly faded from the chart of history.

Over the Assyrians we will not linger. They were a Semitic people, akin to the Babylonians, who remained of little importance, though they were civilized under Babylonian influence, until 1,130 B.C. But they were essentially a military people, and what has come to be called the method of "frightfulness" (the German word really means "intimidation") was much cultivated by them. They were utterly ruthless in war, and were not, like the Babylonians, softened by centuries of life in great cities.

In 1,130 B.C. they beat the Babylonians, and they soon became a power in the ancient world, with Nineveh as their capital. Naturally, victory provoked a thirst for revenge, and they had to hold their position by centuries of war. As Babylon weakened, they grew stronger, and after 700 B.C. Nineveh became the great seat of civilization. Here, in the higher lands of Mesopotamia, stone was plentiful, and the Assyrian artists came to rival those of Egypt. They gave less attention to temples than the Babylonians had done, but the palaces of their kings were among the most gorgeous ever raised. Sargon II built a small royal

town—the "Versailles" of Nineveh—covering 750 acres, with walls 80 feet thick. The palace alone covered 25 acres, and had 209 apartments. The palace of his son, Sennacherib, had a vaulted hall 176 feet long and 40 feet wide, and another 124 feet long and 30 feet wide. The inner walls of these palaces were lined with the wonderful carvings in relief which may be seen in the British Museum to-day; and marble pavements, frescoes, rich hangings, and beautiful bronze and silver work adorned the interiors.

It need hardly be said that we know little of the Assyrians beyond their fighting and luxury-loving kings. And it is a further proof of the great lesson of history which is enforced in this book that the retribution came more swiftly than in the case of any other of the older civilizations. The great age of Assyria begins about 700 B.C. Less than a hundred years later, 606 B.C., the anger that its cruelty had sown came to maturity. The Medes and Babylonians led the avengers against it, and Nineveh was destroyed so savagely and utterly that hardly a stone remained upon a stone.

So ended the great chapter of Mesopotamian civilization. The plain that was once so rich that it could bear three or four crops of wheat a year, that smiled with vast orchards of palms, vines, oranges, apples, and pears, became the appalling desolation it is to-day. The most wonderful cities of the old world became shapeless mounds of clay and sand, of which

men forgot the ancient names. It is something to know now that Babylon, with all its errors, played a great and beneficent part in the drama of humanity before it died.

CHAPTER V

THE TRUE POSITION OF THE HEBREWS

One is tempted to pass immediately from Babylon to Jerusalem, which in so extraordinary a manner conveyed much of the Babylonian culture to the modern world. We now know, however, that the story is more complicated than we once supposed. The civilization of Judæa began much later than the Old Testament represents, and the culture of Babylon and Egypt was filtering through several other civilizations before it became important among the Hebrews.

We have, for instance, mentioned certain Hittites who sacked Babylon in 1,900 B.C. Here was, clearly, a powerful monarchy, flourishing to the north of Palestine, which it would be interesting and profitable to study. We know that a great Egyptian king married the daughter of a Hittite king. Unfortunately, our scholars are still unable to decipher the Hittite language, and the remains are relatively scanty. From representations of them we know that they were a people of strange appearance. They had large noses, low foreheads, and prominent cheek-bones. The men wore peaked caps and pointed shoes. Their religion seems to have been

a nature-religion, with a great mother-earth goddess, as in Crete. But we leave them a mystery—some special development of the population that developed thickly, as we saw, east of the Mediterranean, possibly on the hills of Asia Minor.

The next ancient civilization that we must take up here, following the main threads of evolution as far as it is possible in so tangled a skein, is Persia. I have already said that the Persians and Hindus were originally one people—the southern branch of what one may still call "the Aryan race." This "noble" race, as it called itself, enters the story of civilization comparatively late, and again the historical circumstances give us the explanation.

We know from a treaty of one of the Hittite kings that the Persians and Hindus were still together, to the east of Asia Minor, in the third millennium before Christ. The Hindu branch then began its long trek towards India, and the Persians settled in the mountainous region from the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf. In other words, they lived on the very fringe of the region in which civilization was developing, and they were only slowly touched by its influence. They were a pastoral people, of severe and sober habits, entirely absorbed for ages in the tasks of pastoral and agricultural life.

A kindred people, the Medes, lived nearer to Assyria, and earlier felt the influence of civilization. The Greek historian Herodotus describes their chief city, Ecbatana,

with its wooden palace plated with gold and silver and its great temple of the sun. If he is right that the seven walls which surrounded their precious buildings were faced with gold, silver, orange, blue, red, black, and white, we have a very clear connection with the art of Babylonia. No one, in fact, questions that the Medes and Persians learned civilization from Babylonia and Assyria, their nearest neighbours.

The Medes, as we said, conquered Assyria, and they were long the suzerain power over the Persians. Then Cyrus, the great Persian leader, led a revolt against the Medes, and, conquering Babylon in turn, inaugurated the brief and brilliant world-power of the Persians. Nearly the whole of the old theatre of civilization, including Egypt, fell under their rule. It even extended over Greece, and, as we shall see, led to important developments there. So great became the power of the Persian Kings that in 480 B.C., Xerxes was able to send an army of half a million men right across Asia Minor as far as Athens. It was the greatest achievement of ancient imperialism, and, as in the case of Assyria, it was a sign that Persia was rapidly exhausting itself. Within another century Persia was in decay; in yet another century it fell to the Greeks.

We need not enlarge on the splendours of the royal cities, Persepolis and Susa. All the wealth of Babylon, Nineveh, and a dozen other great cities was gathered into Persia, and for a century or two it shone, perhaps, more gorgeously than any civilization had yet done.

Magnificent remains of the palaces of Darius and Xerxes still survive in the now desolate region. There were two later revivals of Persia, but they do not concern us here.

It is more important for our purpose to inquire what Persia contributed to the stream of mental and moral culture which was slowly broadening through the ages. This contribution was important. A work of the German thinker Nietzsche has made widely known the name of the ancient Persian prophet Zarathustra, or, as he used to be called, Zoroaster. It need hardly be said that his gospel was the exact opposite of that which Nietzsche humorously puts into his mouth. It was intensely ethical and religious.

When Zarathustra lived it is difficult to tell. Some say that he reformed the old Persian religion about 1,000 B.C., but the modern authorities generally place him in the sixth century. In any case, the reformed Persian religion, as we have it in the Avesta, recognized two ultimate principles: a principle of evil, ugliness, and darkness, with legions of devils under him, and a principle of good, light, truth, and beauty, with a corresponding retinue of what moderns would call saints and angels. It was the most remarkable attempt in the old world to tackle the problem of good and evil. But the good principle alone was infinite, and in the end of time it would annihilate the powers of evil and wind up the human drama. The earth would pass away in fire. All men would

be summoned before God for judgment, and the good would be selected for eternal happiness in "the kingdom of God." Every saintly Persian longed for the coming of this "kingdom," to put an end to the triumph of evil, and prepared himself by ascetic self-denial (especially in regard to sex) to appear before God. The code of conduct was intensely ethical, and especially strong on purity.

It is unnecessary to point out how this became a permanent element of culture. Babylonia, like Greece and Rome afterwards, and presumably Crete in its time, believed in a future life, but laid little stress on it, as the future was an underworld of unattractive haziness and uncertainty. Egypt vividly recognized the future life, and invented the idea of a personal moral judgment of the soul after death. Now Persia added a doctrine of an approaching destruction of the world by fire and a general moral judgment of all mankind.

We must at the same time realize how each of these developing cultures spread over the world. Twenty or thirty peoples, the descendants of the Neolithic population in the Eastern Mediterranean district, were during this period developing in a region which hardly measured a thousand miles in each direction. As each of them became imperialistic, it easily covered the whole region. Egypt's cultural "sphere of influence" extended from Crete to Nubia, and westward to Mesopotamia—in the end to Persia. The Babylonian power spread at

one time from Egypt to the Persian Gulf. The Hittites at another time covered half the region. The Persians sent armies and merchants over the whole of it, and even into Europe. The Phœnicians succeeded the Cretans on the sea, and passed even beyond the gates of the Mediterranean.

Palestine was in the very heart of this stirring region, but its circumstances were unfavourable. It was a narrow strip of only moderately good land—far inferior to Mesopotamia and Egypt—between the mountains and the sea. Beyond the mountains was the Arabian desert. To the south was the desert that cut it off from Egypt. Any one who remembers the tremendous difficulties of the British advance upon Palestine from Egypt in 1918 will realize what the task would have been three thousand years ago.

Yet shipping was developed so early that civilization began in Palestine, under Egyptian and Cretan influence, in the third or second millennium before Christ. The Phœnicians and Canaanites, who sustained what culture there was, are generally believed to have come from the direction of Arabia. Later, as we saw, they were joined by the Philistines, who are now regarded as the last relic of the Cretans. Long before 1,000 B.C. there was a fair civilization, in contact wth Egypt and Babylonia. The main Egyptian land-route ran along the coast of Palestine.

The Arabian peninsula, which was mainly barren desert, was meantime breeding a larger population than

it could sustain, and to these nomads of the waste even the moderate land of Palestine seemed to be "flowing with milk and honey." There seem to have been constant irruptions, and about 1,300 B.C. an exceptionally strong wave brought a group of Semitic and barely civilized tribes bearing the now familiar names of Moab, Edom, Ammon, and Israel. There is reason to think that the Israelites adopted in the desert the local mountain-god Jahveh. However that may be, the tribes carved out their respective corners of the land, and slowly assimilated its civilization.

This is how scholars now generally conceive the appearance on the great stage of the early Israelites. The account given in their own sacred book is entirely discredited. The Old Testament as we have it—apart from the latest books—was written in the fifth century, and it is now impossible to determine what historical documents or traditions the writers had before them. The earliest part, *Genesis*, is plainly a collection of Babylonian legends, which the Hebrews no doubt found already adopted, and modified, in Palestine. The kernel of the story of Abraham (a plainly mythical name, as it means "the father of many peoples") may or may not be true. The story of the sojourn in Egypt is rejected by nearly every scholar, as there is no trace whatever of the Israelites among the Egyptian remains; but some scholars think that in their wanderings the Israelitic nomads may have entered the Egyptian Delta —the fringe of the kingdom, which occasionally had

such visitors from the desert. The story of Mount Sinai is rejected as impossible even by opponents of the Higher Critics. The code of laws is largely Babylonian, and certainly late; and it is almost impossible to say how much or little genuine history there is among the obvious fables of *Judges, Samuel, Kings,* and *Chronicles.*

That is now the general attitude of historians. The first positive indication—the only certain indication before 900 B.C—is an Egyptian reference to a tribe named Isirail (clearly Israel) about 1,230 B.C. They were then one of the many tribes which harassed Egyptian imperialism in Palestine, and were punished by the Egyptian armies. A few scholars think that a portion of the tribe may have been carried captive to Egypt, but it is hardly worth while to speculate on these obscure matters.

The story of the conquering of Palestine is mainly mythical, and full of impossibilities. It seems probable that they had taken advantage of the growing weakness of Egypt, about 1,400 B.C., to press in with the other tribes. Against the civilized Canaanites they could do little until they had learned the elements of civilization. Probably the Song of Deborah is a genuine relic of their first great victory over the Canaanites about 1,200 B.C. Then, however, the highly civilized Cretans settled in Palestine, and probably drove the Israelites back to the hills. To the Philistines they must—as the story of Samson suggests—have seemed

barbarous highlanders, elusive marauders, not to be treated with respect when they were captured. As the Philistines weakened, however, a not very scrupulous adventurer named David led a successful revolt and founded the kindom of Israel (about the year 1,000 B.C.).

It must have been still a small and poor kingdom in the days of Solomon, and for several centuries it had the usual troubled and unimportant history of such small kingdoms, especially if they lay in the path of the imperialist powers. Assyria conquered it, and, when Assyria fell, Babylon succeeded to the suzerainty. In 586 B.C. the Israelites refused tribute, and they were carried off to the famous captivity in Babylon which completed their education in civilization. In the fifth century the priests recovered great power among the diminished and demoralized people, and it was then that the Old Testament (apart from a few additions) was compiled. We need add only that they were now under Persian as well as Babylonian influence, and that in the third century Greek influence also came to humanize their stern creed.

I have run over the history of the Jews, as modern scholars generally have reconstructed it, not with any intention of belittling their contribution to civilization, but in order to appreciate it correctly. When one looks over their whole history the Jews have proved one of the most remarkable of the nations we pass in review. The Hittites and Babylonians and Assyrians, the

Phœnicians, and Philistines, Cretans, Lydians, and Phrygians, have perished. The Egyptians, Persians, Arabs, and Greeks survive only as relatively feeble peoples. But the Jews, scattered over the world, have a power and wealth that would be difficult to estimate and are as full of vigour as in the days of David. Their moral and religious culture has prevailed over that of their mighty neighbours, and is only now dropping out of civilization. In the Middle Ages they were a most important part of the agencies that roused Europe from its barbaric slumber, and they may yet play an even more important part in the pacification and unification of the world.

But, while we acknowledge the fullness of their influence, we may claim the right to understand it. Their own story, which is still solemnly and seriously taught to children in all the schools of England, is now absolutely excluded from serious history. They had not even the "genius for morality" with which Matthew Arnold credited them. They were civilized by their neighbours, and they handed on to posterity the ideals they received. Not until the middle of the first millennium before Christ do we find among them a moral culture to compare with that of Egypt and Babylonia. Their Jahveh became "a god of righteousness" a thousand years at least—to confine ourselves to positively known facts—after Ra in Egypt, or Marduk and Shamash in Babylonia, had assumed that character. Indeed, the Egyptian Osiris was a god of

righteousness three thousand years earlier; and Hammurabi, about 2,000 B.C., had hailed Shamash as "the great judge of heaven and earth," by whose command "justice shall glitter in the land," and who bade him "sustain the feeble" and see that "the strong may not oppress the weak."

It is the prophets who made the chief contribution to the moral culture of the Hebrews, and the circumstances in which this distinctive body of men arose are peculiar. That they were no representatives of the official religion is well known. They were what people of loose economic ideas would now call "Socialist agitators." Judæa had become rich and corrupt. There were in Jerusalem extremes of wealth and poverty, and the prophets were the spokesmen of the poor. Even in this respect the moral standard was higher in Egypt and Babylonia, for there it was the rulers (Hammurabi, etc.) and middle-class writers (Ptah-hotep) who taught justice to the advantage of others. Yet the rise of the prophets—call them "dervishes" or what you will—was a great event in history. As far as literary remains go they are our first indication that the mass of the people had a voice and claimed a right to use it.

To the monotheism of the Hebrew writings we may attach less importance. If the gods are concerned about justice, it matters little whether they are one or many. Osiris or Ra of Egypt, Marduk or Shamash of Babylon, or Ahura Mazda of Persia, was supreme enough for ethical purposes. It is, in fact, curious to

note that a typical modern scholar like Professor W. James found polytheism nearer the facts and more easy to accept than monotheism. At all events, Persia and Greece would have imposed monotheism on the world without Jewish aid. The only really important new element in Judæa is the voice of the people; and it is ironic to reflect that it led to no democracy in Judæa, and has nowhere been recognized as the voice of the people until quite modern times. It still remained for Greece and Rome to invent the ideal of democracy.

CHAPTER VI

THE SPLENDOUR OF GREECE

We have so far said nothing about the civilizations of Asia or America, and, although this is not a manual of history, we ought to consider how civilizations could arise so far away from the central germinating region of the earth. As far as the main theatre of civilization is concerned, we now have a very fair idea of the evolution. If you take a pair of compasses and draw a small circle, with Cyprus as its centre, on the map of the world, you have the area of all the oldest civilizations; and the reason for this we have already given. The African is not of an inferior race, but the vast desert, from the Atlantic to the Red Sea, cut him off from this stimulating region. So with the Australian, the Melanesian, the Eskimo, and so on. If you wonder why the Polynesian is much more advanced than any of these, the answer is that experts now generally believe that the Polynesians really came from the Caucasic region and were cousins to the Europeans.

Now there might very well be other parts of the earth where the conditions of the Mediterranean region were more or less reproduced—that is to say, where

circumstances brought a large number of peoples with differing cultures into close contact with each other. One of these is Central America. The inhabitants of South America have all had to pass through the narrow neck of Central America. Very primitive man—of whom the Yahgan of Tierra del Fuego is possibly a surviving specimen—may have crossed on foot from Europe to America by land in the North Atlantic which has, to our knowledge, since disappeared. Many now think this. But the American Indian is an offshoot from Asia by way of Alaska, and in his dispersion over the continent he would get more or less congested in the "bottle-neck" from Southern Mexico to Panama. We have every reason to believe, from the earliest remains, that native American civilization developed here, and spread to Mexico and Peru. This development seems to fall within the Christian Era.[1]

In the case of China we may possibly have another independent theatre of the evolution of civilization under the same conditions. Man was probably evolved somewhere in Asia, and Asia was not glaciated during the Ice Age to anything like the same extent as Europe. There was undoubtedly a large aboriginal population—or several populations differently developed in different regions—and the more fertile areas would tend to become centres of struggle in the early days of agricul-

[1] There is a theory that civilization reached Peru from the Pacific Islands. But the Polynesians never were civilized, and the distance is prohibitive. Moreover, American archæology points to a development from Central America.

ture. It would be quite easy to understand the evolution of civilization in the best part of China and on the plains of India.

It is, however, not certain that even the Chinese civilization was a quite independent development. The archæology of Asia is not yet well studied, and the beginnings of Chinese civilization are obscure. The Chinese records are no more reliable than the Hebrew or the Roman. For our modern scholars the historic period opens in China only about 1,122 B.C. Before that we have only a few bronze vessels and bells with ancient hieroglyphics on them, indicating a rudimentary civilization as far back, possibly, as 1,700 B.C. Many experts think that there are traces of a migration from Central Asia, if not further west; and so we get the suggestion, which I have given earlier, of a connection with the Sumerians who founded Babylonian civilization. But the general opinion is that Chinese civilization developed in China. In fact, its main development was clearly after 1,100 B.C., and it runs on the lines with which we are now familiar.

India is, of course, much more easily connected with the west. We have seen that the ancestors of the Hindus branched off from the Persians and moved north-eastward. They seem to have entered the Punjab, by Chitral and through Afghanistan, about 2,000 B.C.; and they became the masters of the less vigorous and less warlike primitive inhabitants. But they can hardly be said to have taken civilization to India. They were

a simple pastoral Aryan people, with agriculture and metal, but a very primitive patriarchal economy. Some think that the earlier inhabitants (Dravidians) were navigators, and had already brought the rudiments of civilization by sea from Babylonia. At all events, the great mingling of peoples on the plains of northern India gave the essential condition of progress, and by 1,000 B.C. India was civilized.

We cannot here go into the history of these civilizations, but a word should be added on their long stagnation. This is not difficult to understand. There was no more a "genius for conservatism" in China than a genius for morality in Judæa, or a genius for law and organization in Rome. But there was a very real isolation from other civilizations. Once a high culture was developed in China, it had no contacts with other high cultures until modern times, apart from temporary contact with Rome about 100 B.C. and with India at a later date. The map explains the conservatism of China. It is nonsense to say that there were "principles of progress" in European culture which were lacking in Chinese.

It was much the same with India. The fully developed civilization, which was able to produce Buddha, just as China produced Kung-fu-tse, in the sixth century B.C., had no stimulating contact with equal cultures, as all the Western civilizations had. For a time, after the invasion by Alexander the Great, India was quickened by Greek influence, and there was considerable fresh

progress. But the collapse of Western civilization after the fall of Greece and Rome cut it off once more, and India remained unprogressive.

These general remarks must suffice for what we may call the outlying civilizations of the earth, and we must return to the main stream of human development. So far we have been dealing with Asiatics, and this fact of civilization being so overwhelmingly Asiatic for ages led some to form a dreamy theory of the "genius of Asia" and the "wisdom of the East." The discovery of Crete rather disturbed this shallow theory. The curious thing is that people who love these pieces of verbiage always regard themselves as "profound," and look upon the man who consults maps and geological conditions as superficial and "materialistic." But it is precisely this "materialism" that has made the story of man at last fairly intelligible, and we now apply it to the awakening of Europe.

It is well to take a broad view, to begin with. Nearer Asia—or the region from the Nile to the Persian Gulf—made more rapid progress than Europe at first for reasons that we have seen. At the close of the Ice Age men of the New Stone Age spread over Europe. But, just because they spread, they had not the same stimulus to progress as those of the Mediterranean region who remained in contact. There was, of course, progress. The Britons, for instance, developed an elementary civilization, with fine

gold and bronze ornaments, long before the Romans came. Broadly speaking, however, the New Stone Age men of Europe made little progress, except where, as in Greece and Italy, the Cretan civilization touched them.

Then the "Aryans" (to which the Britons belonged, of course) came upon the scene. The real Europeans —ancestors of the modern European nations—began. They had, apparently, lived somewhere near the Caspian Sea and the Caucasus mountains during the later phase of the Ice Age. They had become accustomed to bracing conditions, and had gone further north as the ice receded. The Teutonic and Slav families went right up to the Baltic region. Then they turned south and west. The Celts reached France and Britain; and a large family took the nearer route to Italy and Greece. The ancestors of the Greeks were, naturally, the first to reach the sea and come into contact with the older civilization, and they were therefore the first to be civilized. The Romans were the second nearest to the old theatre of civilization, and so their phase of world-history comes after that of the Greeks. They civilized the Celts of France and Britain, and the light gradually spread to the Teutons of the north (who were moving steadily south) and the Slavs of the wild east.

That is a bird's-eye view of the civilizing of Europe which some readers may find useful. Now let us take it a little more in detail: first Greece, then Rome, and then a general survey.

Greece was occupied by the northern fringe of the Mediterranean race after the Ice Age—a simple pastoral folk with a New Stone Age culture. They got the use of bronze from Crete, and made progress. In time colonists or adventurers from civilized Crete landed on the tips of Greece and on the near coast of Asia Minor, and founded cities and princedoms. There were cities, with formidable walls, at Mycenæ and Tiryns, as well as at Troy. Some very beautiful specimens of Cretan art have been found in Greece. In other words, Greece was beginning to be civilized (from Crete) long before the "Greeks" came. It did not wait for any race with a "genius for culture."

But from about 2,000 B.C. the early waves of the advancing Aryans began to flow over it from the north. They were not called "Greeks"—even the name "Hellenes" was applied only to one tribe at first—but we had better avoid here the names of the successive waves of invaders. The first comers were not too formidable or numerous, and they mingled with the civilized folk and adopted their ways. We get the chiefs and princes of the Homeric poetry—still half Cretan, perhaps—with their carouses and fights and semi-barbarous luxury. It was they who sacked Troy, and probably they who did the chief work in destroying Crete. They flowed over the Mediterranean and helped in an attack on Egypt.

These were "bronze warriors." Meantime iron had been discovered in the Danube region, and the next

great Aryan wave that surged through the passes and fell upon Greece was a body of more formidable fighters with iron weapons who swept all before them. In fact, they made a clean sweep of civilization. Greece was barbarized again. The sea was covered with Greek rovers or pirates. It was something like the story of England after the Romans withdrew, and the Vikings and Danes dominated the sea and desolated the land. The old cities were abandoned. By 1,000 B.C. the first European (really Cretan) civilization was over.

But the earlier and already civilized "Greeks"—for the correct names of the various peoples the reader must see larger works—had passed in great numbers to the islands and the coast of Asia Minor, and there they nursed what remained of civilization. Within a few centuries there was a new and very remarkable civilization on this coast of Asia Minor. Nearly all the great names in early Greek literature, philosophy, and science—Homer, Sappho, Thales, Anaximander, Pythagoras, Democritus, etc.—belonged to it or studied in it. There was a chain of civilizations across Asia Minor, linking them with Mesopotamia, and numbers of them visited Egypt. But they were Europeans, and, as the wild disorder of the "iron age" settled down, they communicated their civilization, slowly and gradually, to the peoples of Greece.

The country was full of different tribes, the chiefs of which now became the kings of so many peoples. There were the Spartans in the south, who clung to

the institution of royalty and had drastic discipline for military purposes. There were seven or eight other sections of what we call the Greek race, but for the purpose of this small work we shall have to confine our attention to Attica, of which Athens was the capital.

There used to be a good deal of rhetorical speculation about the reasons why the Athenians came to play so brilliant a part in the civilization of Europe. Some talked about their beautiful blue sky and soft green hills and the blue waters of the Mediterranean within sight; as if the sunshine and blue waters and flower-decked hills were not the same to-day. Others made much of "the genius of the Athenians for culture"; which is equal to saying that the Athenians did great things because they were capable of doing them. The real explanation lies in what we may broadly call the economic conditions. We must remember that there had been, not two hundred miles away a civilization of an advanced character fifteen hundred years before Athens was fully civilized, and that the first artists and thinkers of Greece were not at Athens, but on the coast of Asia Minor, and were plainly inspired by Cretan, Egyptian, and Phœnician civilization.

There were good reasons why Athens was particularly open to receive culture from Asia Minor. The district was fairly sheltered from the north by mountains, and it had not been so much trodden down by

the northern invaders. Some think that the older Cretan-Greek civilization survived there better than elsewhere in Greece. However that may be, it was a comparatively peaceful province. Further, the men of Attica were closely related to the Greeks on the islands and on the Asiatic coast, and from Athens they could keep up fair communication with them.

Hence when, in the eighth and seventh centuries before Christ, Greece became more or less settled and civilized, the Athenians were among the foremost. At this time there was a considerable ferment among the new pupils of civilization. They roamed over the sea, and founded colonies in Italy and Sicily. They began to overhaul their ancient religious traditions and their laws. Civic life and commerce were growing. Men's minds were expanding and getting more receptive of new ideas.

Then occurred one of the really momentous changes in the evolution of civilization. The people affirmed their rights by abolishing the monarchy. Up to the present every civilization we have studied was a despotic monarchy, and now Europe opens a new strain of political development. We must remember that such a change was much easier in Greece than it would have been in Egypt or Asia. All the States in Greece were very small monarchies, each lodged in a very small territory; and it was more possible for the people to think and act together. Moreover, the Greek monarchs were not despotic. The nobles—the successors

of the chief's "captains"—always had a good deal to say in an Aryan tribe, and they checked the power of the king. Then arose a commercial class and a body of artisans, with claims of their own. However it was done—we have no accurate history of these times—the Athenians abolished royalty and became, in effect, an aristocracy.

The further political development is a long story, which we must make short. With the growth of commerce and industry a class of rich men sprang up, and the fight of "haves" and "have-nots" began. It was a small world, we must remember, and struggles were possible there which would at once have been sternly crushed in Egypt or Babylonia. The whole sixth century was filled with the revolt of the people against aristocracy and plutocracy, ending in complete democracy. Although there was what we should call "manhood suffrage," the State was so small that even in the year 400 B.C. it was possible to gather the whole of the citizens of Athens in one field (the Pnyx) and debate in common. Small nations have their uses.

This was a very rapid political development compared with what we have hitherto seen. Progress in other matters—art, science, industry, etc.—was not so rapid. But an event now occurred which was fateful for Athens.

The Greeks in Asia Minor had fallen under the power of Persia. They rebelled, and the Athenians assisted them, so the Persian king sent a "punitive

expedition" against these audacious barbarians. He probably regarded the Athenians much as we regard the Pathans to-day. The first Persian expedition was broken by the Athenians at the Battle of Marathon. Then Xerxes sent the army of half a million men to which I have referred previously, and, as the Athenians retreated before it, the old city of Athens was utterly destroyed by the Persians.

It was a melancholy sight for the Athenians when, after (with the help of the other Greeks) driving off the Persians, they returned to their city. It was a bed of ashes and rubbish. But the reconstruction was one of the greatest pages of history: a page that ought to be preached to every one of the stricken nations of Europe to-day. First they looked after their security. They built a five-mile wall round the city, and long walls down to their seaport; and they brought all the Greek States together in a defensive League. At this point Athens got the services of a great statesman, Pericles, who had in his mind a vision of "the city beautiful." He gathered about him the finest Greek architects and artists; and, as Athens now had the good fortune to enter upon fifty years of peace, they reared such public buildings as the world had never seen before and has never seen since. The first democracy in the world built, with small resources, the finest city the world has yet known.

Much as I should like to do it, I have not space here to describe this wonderful marble heart of Athens.

On the central hill were two temples, the finer of which, the Parthenon, was the most exquisite building ever put together: a severe and chaste structure in yellowish marble, adorned with such sculpture in the purest white marble, with brilliant red or blue background, as no artist has since equalled. A noble and lofty marble portico, on the hill-side, formed an approach to these temples. At the foot of the hill lay the old market-place (Agora), which was now transformed into a public square, lined with stately colonnades and beautiful civic buildings. Other superb temples and monuments were reared in different parts of the city. There has never been, and is not in the world to-day, a city with as beautiful a central part.

Other arts made equal progress. In the rocky side of the hill was cut a large amphitheatre, capable of accommodating more than twenty thousand citizens on its tiers of stone benches. It was the first theatre, with the first dramas, comedies, and tragedies. All these words are Greek, and remind us of what we owe to Greece. And these were not only the *first* comedies and tragedies, but they were such as no later age has surpassed, if it has equalled them. The tragedies of Æschylus Sophocles, and Euripides, and the comedies of Aristophanes and Menander, absorbed the Greek democracy. There also orators like Demosthenes delivered the greatest political speeches known in literature.

So Athens gave Europe, more than 2,000 years ago,

superb lessons in politics and art. It was not less great in philosophy, mental and moral. The whole world knows the names of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Zeno, and Epicurus. It was equally supreme in the cultivation of the body, and produced magnificent types of young men and women. Gymnastics and athletics are Greek words, just as logic, ethics, politics, poetry, drama, etc., are. In a word, Athens gave Europe a magnificent lead in every section of culture. "Truth, beauty, and goodness" was the ideal of its thinkers.

Now let us notice the shades of the picture. Mr. Wells has given us a dark account of Athens which is, frankly, unintelligible, and we must not run to the opposite extreme. There was slavery. A blot, certainly; but we can hardly expect a young civilization to put an end at once to one of the oldest of institutions. Slavery was beginning to trouble the Athenian moralists; and we may add that the slaves of Athens were not ill treated, and were mainly engaged in domestic work. There was the political exclusion of woman. But, instead of being a reproach, this merely reminds us again of the remarkable distance the Athenians had gone in so short a time. More than 2,000 years ago the emancipation of woman was a burning question in Athens, and Plato was an ardent advocate of it. Let us who have only just accomplished it—and not yet in full—be modest in our criticisms.

Then there is the question of morals. I do not speak of religion, as it is well known that no educated

Greek at this time believed in Zeus and Athene and all their tribes. The educated Greeks were divided into monotheists, atheists, and those (Stoics and Epicureans) whose real belief was probably more like what we now call Agnosticism. But the code of morals of all schools was as high as ours, and there is no reason to think that the general level of Athenian morality was lower than that of a nineteenth-century city. One of the best authorities—and he a clergyman, the Rev. Professor Mahaffy—says:—

> When I compare the religion of Christ with that of Zeus, Apollo, and Aphrodite, and consider the enormous, the unspeakable contrasts, I wonder not at the greatness, but at the smallness, of the advance in public morality which has been attained.[1]

In point of fact, Professor Mahaffy does not indicate any particular advance in regard to morals. He finds the comedies of Menander, which were very popular, quite modern in ethical "tone." He finds Socrates "far superior to the average Christian moralist." He clears the character of Aspasia, and warns us not to be too sure about the Athenian *hetairai* being courtesans in the modern sense. And so on. It is always very difficult to settle such questions when there are no statistics. As far as we can positively say, moral ideas and practice were much the same in the old civilizations as in modern cities. It is precisely one of the points on which there has been least progress.

[1] *Social Life in Greece*, p. 8.

Apart from a certain harshness in some things, which we might expect in a people so recently (compared with the older civilizations and ourselves) issued from barbarism, the great defect of the Greeks (not merely Athens) was that the mass of the people were left uneducated. This is the fundamental defect of every civilization, ancient and modern, and the world will never go well until it is remedied. The Athenian democracy was ignorant, and blundered badly. It would be enough to quote the fact that it killed Socrates, one of the greatest and most exalted of moralists. It also drove from Athens men of science who dared to suggest astronomical truths which were against the narrow creed of the people. Certainly we must not admit all the strictures against the Athenian democracy. The great artists and architects and dramatists could not have lived and worked without the support or consent of the people. They, apparently, loved great and beautiful things. But they were left in ignorance, while the philosophers talked in their gardens to select circles, and when the time of trial came the democracy failed.

The first blunder was imperialism. In its greatest days Athens was a city-state of some 300,000 or 400,000 people, of whom every adult male (if Athenian) had a vote. It was, as I said, bound in a League with the other city-states of Greece. As it became rich and famous throughout the old world, it grew ambitious, and made the other small states subject to it. Its modest

empire even spread to the cities of Asia Minor. As usual, this led to a growing discontent, hatred, and anger. At last it came to war, with Sparta. The fifty years of peace were succeeded by nearly fifty years of war. There was the usual "destruction of the fit" and survival of the less fit. The democracy and the leadership degenerated. More wars were brought on. Altogether about eighty years were troubled with war and all the waste that war meant.

Just at this time Philip of Macedon began to intrigue for the formation of a Greek empire under himself. Demosthenes, in the theatre, thundered out his famous orations against Philip, but the democracy was weary and incompetent. The imperialist adventurer got his way. The Greek states were swallowed up in the world-empire of Alexander "the Great," Philip's son.

For a time this seemed to give protection. This was the age of Aristotle, we must remember, and the Stoics and Epicureans had still to come. To many of us, indeed, this seems to be the best age of Greek thought, as the mind was brought back to positive knowledge from the theosophy of Plato and the metaphysics of Aristotle. The Stoics worked out a human code of morals which was, in the Roman world, to have a remarkable social influence. Epicurus—whose system was slandered by the more ascetic Stoics and has been libelled ever since—conceived a philosophy of nature and man of the most promising character, including an ethic of the most sober description. But

thought was now dissociated entirely from civic life and politics, and Athens rapidly decayed. In the second century B.C. the Romans "delivered the Greeks from the Macedonian yoke," as they put it, and—as the drowsy Athenians might have expected—completed its protection by bringing it under their own yoke. The lamp of civilization was handed on to the next great branch of the Aryan race. But Athens, in its two hundred years of brilliant civilization, had made upon the world a mark that will never be effaced—a deeper mark than Egypt had made in four thousand years.

CHAPTER VII

THE VICES AND VIRTUES OF ROME

We have already seen the close relationship of the early Greeks and the early Romans. The traditions of both peoples—indeed, of all ancient peoples—were almost entirely legendary, and it has remained for modern science to learn, laboriously, the movements of the race in that dim dawn of history. Naturally, our knowledge is still very imperfect, but we have a confident picture of the general situation. During the later part of the New Stone Age, or while Egypt and Babylon were building up their civilizations, the large family of white-skinned tribes which, for convenience, we may still call the Aryan race was moving towards the south of Europe. One branch represented the ancestors of the Greeks and Romans, and in the region of the Danube it divided. One section found its way through the mountain-passes to Greece. Another section took the route to central Italy.

Long before modern archæology came into existence it was known that a civilized people existed in Italy before the Romans. Latin literature itself betrayed the debt of the Romans to these Etruscans, as they were

called, far more clearly than Greek literature showed a debt to the Cretans. The Etruscan civilization, in fact, flourished for a time side by side with that of Rome. It then lay to the north of Rome, between the Arno and the Tiber; but there is reason to believe that at an earlier date it had covered the greater part of Italy. Its remains have now been investigated, and it bears all the marks of what we call civilization—royal political organization, written language, cities, law, fine work in gold and bronze and pottery.

Who these Etruscans were is still something of a mystery. Scholars are inclined to think that they came from Asia Minor—some connect them with the Hittites—about 1,100 B.C., and welded the existing peoples into a kingdom. But, although we have thousands of inscriptions in their tongue, no one has yet deciphered it, and so the affinities of the people are not known. This does not matter much for our purpose if, as some experts think, they found civilization already existing among the older inhabitants of Italy and adopted it. In that case the early Italian civilization falls into line as the western fringe of the general Mediterranean civilization of which we have seen so much.

By the eighth century B.C., when the Romans just begin to be dimly discernible as a small pastoral people with their chief village, or small town, at Rome, the Etruscans were a powerful and wealthy kingdom. The southerners seem to have been filled with wonder at the

size and gaiety of the Etruscan cities, the splendour of their games (which Rome adopted from them), their rich jewellery and ornaments, their fine fleet of commercial vessels on the Adriatic. In other words, they initiated the Romans to civilization; and in the course of time they were, of course, absorbed and ruined by the Romans.

But the first task is to show how this little pastoral people in the south became strong enough to conquer all their neighbours. *Why* they should wish to do it we need not stay to examine; for in those old days—so different from ours!—there was only one limit to your desires, and that was the limit of your strength. But let us not be cynical. Civilization is, as I said, a thin film of fine sentiments and ideals trying to check human impulses that had run wild for a million years, and the film was naturally thinner and younger in the old world than it is to-day. The Romans were no worse than others, but they were differently situated. Many experts believe that two peoples—two branches of the Aryan race—are mingled in the Romans when we first catch sight of them. The great class-division of the Romans was into patricians (the rich) and plebeians (the workers, the relatively poor); and it is supposed that the patricians represent the Sabines, who in the sixth century united with the Latins (the *plebs*) to drive the Etruscan outposts from the Roman district.

Rome was their market-town and their chief centre

for checking the Etruscans. It had remarkable advantages. The visitor to Rome to-day has some difficulty in recognizing its famous "seven hills." They are gentle elevations over which the tide of masonry easily flows. But in those primitive days a small central site sheltering between seven hills was very useful. Most early towns had merely one central hill, to which the inhabitants could retire when the enemy appeared. The Romans could pack their cattle and wives in the central valley while the men lined the hills.

As in Greece, the organization was such that in so small a world it was not difficult to pass from royalty to aristocracy, and then on to democracy. As we know Rome, after it had become a small city or town, it consisted of about three thousand households. The householders or burgesses were the patricians; the plebeians were clients or dependents of these, and there was a further population of slaves (captives on whom both patricians and plebeians were eager to put as much of the work as possible). Ten households formed a clan, ten clans a wardship; and thirty wardships (in theory) made up "the Roman people." The patricians provided the army; and the relegation of so much work to slaves left the army free to evolve a high discipline and conquer feeble surrounding peoples. The kingship was not hereditary. The king was chosen by and from the burgesses, and checked by their Senate, so that by 509 B.C. it was resolved to abandon the royal form, and Rome became a Republic.

The further evolution was therefore very like that of Greece on the political side and very unlike it on another side. In Greece there were ten fairly equal small States and a common enemy, Persia. In southern Italy there was one powerful little people among many feeble ones. The Etruscans were beginning to soften and decay in proportion as the Romans spread their Republic and drafted more and more hardy farmers into their army. From the force of circumstances they specialized on expansion, which involved stern attention to military discipline (law) and organization. Athens also went in for imperialist expansion, we remember, and with great success; but Athens had a formidable military neighbour in Sparta, while Rome had only an enervated people, the Etruscans, to keep off until (in the third century) she was strong enough to conquer it. So, in a word, Rome went on from conquest to conquest, and became the last great world-empire of the old era. The history must be read elsewhere.

Circumstances thus directed the Roman "genius" —which is the common vigour of a fresh people specialized for a particular purpose—into a distinct channel. Internally the development was more like that of Athens. The plebeians had to be drawn into the army, and take a large part in the growing industry. They resented the aristocracy of the patricians, and demanded what we call the right to vote. So there was inaugurated the long and furious struggle which ended in complete democracy. To anticipate a little, we

may add that, as the burdens were put more and more upon the other Italians, they claimed and got citizenship. In the end, provincials outside Italy got it. Centuries of warfare used up the old Roman stock, and the military holocausts of a later date and the better part of the "Romans" were provincial blood.

Another development proceeded alongside these. The old Roman social and religious ideals began to totter. When the Romans overran Greece, then Syria and Persia, and brought back new ideas as well as new luxuries and loads of spoil, the partiarchal "virtues" became old-fashioned. There was another stern fight over these. Conservatives had shuddered, no doubt, over the "tearing-up of the constitution," the deposition of their "kings by the grace of Jupiter." Now they found that the home, the foundation of the State, was in danger; and the old religion, which was essential to the fabric of civilization, was in worse danger. Marriage—the stern old type of marriage—was threatened. Woman was in revolt against the beneficent rule of her husband. Early Roman literature tells us much about these developments.

A great deal of admiration has been wasted on the virtues of these earlier Romans. The old ideal was that the father was absolute master in his own house. The law did not cross his threshold. When a female child was born he pleased himself whether it was to be retained or no. He had power of life and death over his wife, children, and slaves. Therefore, while

it is true that the older Roman women were very virtuous, it was a virtue exacted under fear of death. The woman was her husband's property, and must not be soiled. The men were not forbidden to amuse themselves with the female slaves, or with the courtesans who now appeared. The women, rightly, rebelled. They demanded freedom, education, and political rights. There was a fierce agitation for "woman's rights" as early as the second century B.C. We must add, however, that the older Romans did not use their drastic powers to any grave extent. Women were as generally loved and kindly treated as elsewhere. Even cruelty to slaves was not common.

Thus Rome fought its way through the inevitable struggles of civilization, complicated by a long and terrible series of wars with Carthage for the mastery of the Mediterranean and a long and devastating Civil War due to the ambitions of its generals and politicians. As in the case of Greece, we find a curiously modern note in its struggles. Nearly all the great controversies of modern times were aflame in ancient Athens and Rome—ethical, religious, political, economic, educational, feminist, etc. The clock of social evolution was stopped when they fell, only to start again at the end of the eighteenth century.

Of the religious and moral evolution I have written much in other books, and little can be said here. By the first century B.C. educated Romans generally ceased to be polytheists and merely paid external conformity

to the old religion. Philosophers carefully note that the Romans invented no new system of thought. They were practical men. Possibly most of us do not regret that they found no time for metaphysics. Those of them who were inclined to speculative thought—and there was always a good market for Greek philosophers at Rome—were either Stoics or Epicureans; or it would be nearer to the truth to say that most of the educated Romans more or less blended the two. Nominally Stoicism was the favourite philosophy, and in the first and second centuries of the Christian Era this ethic—it was never a religion—led to an outburst of philanthropy such as the world was not to witness again until the nineteenth century. It was essentially a doctrine of human brotherhood. Its orators, friends of the Emperor, publicly denounced slavery in the Forum as contrary to natural law.

On the ethical side Rome has, like all the old civilizations, been grossly misunderstood by later ages, but I must refer to my larger works (especially *The Empresses* of Rome) for details. It was only during a few short periods, under insane or half-insane Emperors like Caligula and Nero, that there was any blatant exhibition of what some writers represent as habitual. It is enough to say that the Roman law, like the Babylonian, sentenced the adulterer to death; and the first Emperor drove his beloved daughter into exile for life for that transgression alone, while the fourth Empress only saved herself by suicide from a worse fate.

Meantime the power and wealth of Rome had become enormous. The city of Rome came to have a million inhabitants; the Empire a hundred million. Wealth, as in all such developments, came to be distributed with cruel inequality. The patricians lived in superb mansions on the hills, while the people crowded into dense and poor tenements in the valleys. Even here, however, current ideas are materially wrong, and Mr. Wells gives an extraordinarily wrong impression of the condition of the people. The descriptions we have of the luxury of the rich are misleading to the modern mind. Many people have the idea that there were wealthier capitalists in Rome than had ever been before or have ever been since. As a matter of fact, our experts who have worked out the fortunes of these Roman capitalists in modern terms find that the richest of them were far less wealthy than scores of our modern capitalists. Rockefeller could have bought up the whole of them in any particular generation, and there are a dozen British capitalists any one of whom could have bought up any half-dozen Roman capitalists.

At the other end of the scale was, not the proletariat, but the vast army of slaves. In mitigation of this grave blot on the Roman civilization one can only say that it was young. It inherited a tradition from the whole civilized world that prisoners taken in war might be enslaved, and it takes ages to uproot a tradition that is at once ancient, world-wide, and very profitable. The modern worker is apt to forget

that the proletariat of Rome, as well as the rich, profited immensely by slavery. The workers were supplied with food without payment *because* it was produced by slave-labour far away; and many other of their extraordinary privileges were made possible only by slave-labour.

The evolution of slavery is so essential a point in our story that a few further words must be said on it. Every ancient civilization enslaved the prisoners who were taken in war. This was supposed to be a moral improvement, as in barbarous days they had been put to death. Rome, with its centuries of warfare, had a prodigious number of such slaves. They were twice as numerous as free men in Italy, and in a higher proportion still in the whole Empire. At Rome itself they were chiefly domestic, and were not, as a rule, cruelly treated. In the agricultural provinces they were terribly worked, and were housed like cattle; but in the capital cruelty was not nearly so common as is often represented. The satirist Juvenal, whose stories are not taken seriously by modern historians, is responsible for a good deal of the libel. One has only to reflect for a moment on the story of slaves being thrown to the fishes by angry mistresses. There is no fish in Europe—there never was—that will eat a man; and the fish in the Roman domestic fish-pond were generally carp. But in the age of demoralization by luxury and parasitism there were masters and mistresses who abused the despotic right which the old law gave. Before the end of the first century B.C.

this cruelty was checked by new laws, and the slave was granted the right of appeal to the court. The Stoics, who won great influence in Rome, repeatedly pointed out that the slaves were men and brothers. Their finest orator, Dio Chrysostom, has the honour of being the first moralist in history to denounce slavery in principle.

During the first century, and later, slavery was curtailed by economic causes. It was discovered that a free and willing worker was better than a slave, and slaves were encouraged to buy their freedom. In the normal course of development the institution was doomed. But Rome passed into a period of confusion and demoralization, and the progress was suspended. The Christian Church acquiesced in slavery without protest.[1] Not a single voice was raised in the Western world against it. But when Rome fell, in the fifth century, and the German barbarians destroyed all the capitalism of Rome, the slaves became ownerless, and they generally dispersed. The institution, however, still lingered in places (as in England) until the eighth century; but in Europe generally slavery had by this

[1] I am sorry to have to point out here two very large and very positive errors in Mr. Wells's *Outline*. He says that Christians presented "a united front against slavery" (p. 292) and gave the Roman world education. Both these statements are extraordinarily opposed to the facts. There is only one Christian condemnation of slavery (doubtfully attributed to Gregory of Nyssa) in the whole of the first eight centuries, and that is rather a condemnation of the luxury of ownership. To education we return later.

time passed, from sheer economic causes, into serfdom —which was little better. It hardly becomes English and American writers to cast slavery into the teeth of the ancient Romans—who knew little of the past and were only a few centuries out of barbarism—in view of the horrors of black slavery in Christendom right down to the nineteenth century.

The reader will not misunderstand. Rome was an imperfect civilization, with streaks of the earlier barbarism still visible in it. At all events, I do not myself admit that either Greek or Roman civilization was, everything considered, and quite apart from science, equal to ours (since 1850). But these older peoples have been so long calumniated, and it is so irritating to find writers of the highest ability and ideals, though lacking in technical knowledge, repeat the calumnies, that one is tempted to enlarge a little.

In passing now to the body of workers of ancient Rome we need make no apology. It is one of the most interesting and pertinent points of this part of our study. The vague idea of many people that practically all labour in Rome was done by slaves is a singular mistake. In the population of one million there were, it is estimated, at least 300,000 free workers. It seems a moderate estimate when we learn that one place of entertainment, the Great Circus, accommodated nearly 400,000 spectators. And these artisans of Rome had, contrary to what so many seem to think, a better time than any other workers ever had, or have to-day.

Their hours of labour were not excessive. They began early, as one does in a warm climate; but the bells which closed the day's work generally rang at three in the afternoon. They had then the most princely baths imaginable to resort to. The Antoninian Baths alone accommodated 1,600 bathers, and they were as remote as possible from the brick and iron structures of modern times. These baths—and there were several such buildings—had their interiors faced with porphyry and other beautiful stones; and, besides the great marble basins of hot and cold water, there were gymnastic rooms, libraries, and marble colonnades or lounges in which one could play dice or other games of the day. The charge for admission was only one farthing of our money, as the structures were built by Emperors.

Further, the days of labour were far fewer than they are now. There was no Sabbath; but, whereas the best modern worker has only about ninety free days a year, including his Sundays and Saturday afternoons, the Roman artisan had 175 days of public games, besides occasional festivals. He scarcely worked half the year. The Roman worker's entertainment, moreover, was generally supplied free by the Emperors, the patricians, or the municipality. The Great Circus, which was free—held 380,000 spectators, and the entertainment provided sometimes cost a public man £90,000 in one day. The chief spectacle in it was the chariot-race (with interludes of foot-

races, tight-rope dancers, conjurers, etc.), which was the great passion of the Roman people. The amphitheatre (Colosseum), in which the brutal gladiatorial shows were held, had less than one-fourth that number of spectators, and was not nearly so popular as the bloodless games of the Circus. It also was free and very costly. The finest things were brought to Rome from the ends of the earth to amuse the Roman people. Then there were the theatres, in which plays without words were enacted.

In addition to this the Roman worker had free corn for his bread (his chief article of diet), and later Emperors added free olive oil and pork. He had free education. By the fourth century there was a system of free elementary schools for the children of all workers; a system of free secondary schools for the better pupils; and a number of special schools (like universities) which also could be reached without payment by the poor. The municipalities everywhere were compelled to maintain these.[1] The municipality of Rome also provided a number of free medical men, and medical treatment could be had free at any temple of the healing god Æsculapius.

The workers had their Trade Unions, or "Colleges" as they called them. In every district the builders,

[1] All these schools were saturated with Paganism—the only class-books being Pagan literature—so that it is strange to claim that the Church inspired them. It destroyed them as soon as it could.

smiths, tanners, etc., had their own club-room, and met periodically for suppers. They provided burial-funds, and it is clear from the frequent condemnation of them by the authorities that they were used for keeping up wages, if not for political purposes. The practice was borrowed from the Greek workers; and the early Guilds of the Middle Ages, which were at first severely condemned by the Church, were merely continuations of the Roman trade combinations.

We must also bear in mind that the civic heart of Rome, the rows of magnificent buildings in the centre of the city, were second only to those of Athens, and were more available to the Roman workers than public buildings are in any great city to-day. In Rome one lived out of doors most of the year; and the two great crowded quarters, where the workers lived in four- and five-story tenements, were close to the centre. A few small rooms in a block—with a good supply of pure water (free) and a sewage system such as the world would not see again until the nineteenth century—sufficed for the worker and his family. The most distant was not a mile from the Forum, the old market-place, now transformed into a double row of marble palaces—law-courts, halls, temples, etc. The Emperors built new Fora for the workers; open spaces with beautiful marble colonnades on each side where the worker could shelter from the sun and play his everlasting dice or bet on the next chariot race. I have seen the "show-places" of many cities—

London, Liverpool, and Edinburgh, Belfast and Dublin, New York and Chicago, Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam, Cologne, Florence, Venice, Rome, Sydney, Melbourne, Durban, etc.—but they are tawdry compared with the Fora of ancient Rome.

All this, athough it gives us a more just idea of a dead civilization, must not blind us to the defects and weaknesses of Rome—slavery, parasitism, national cupidity, brutality here and there. From the point of view of national stability there were two chief defects. It is mere rhetoric to talk of the "vices" of Rome bringing about its ruin. The causes were the exhaustion due to constant war and the economic rottenness which resulted from their plundering the world. Rome, for all its "genius for organization," had a bad fiscal system, and there was the profound economic truth which must have dawned upon every reader of the preceding pages that it did not earn by labour what it enjoyed. There was no economic basis to its splendid structure.

And war went on century by century. In the first century before Christ the workers sold their democratic birthright (for baths, circuses, free bread, etc.) and accepted an Emperor. Within a short time quite worthless men mounted the throne, and there had to be assassinations and struggles for the dignity. In the second half of the first century after Christ a great improvement was brought about by the Stoic philosophy and by the infusion of fresh provincial

blood. Rome rallied, and there was a great century, during which most of the humanitarian work was done. Then followed a century of disorder and petty civil war.

In the fourth century Rome was once more orderly and apparently powerful. The system of schools was completed. The general standard of character was good. When Constantine "the Great" tried a few domestic murders in Rome, the Pagans made the place too hot for him, and he went off to found Constantinople—then on the eastern fringe of the Empire. Rome enjoyed the gentility and sobriety of age. How long it might still have lasted, in spite of a thousand years of war, no man can say. Its best men had not the least consciousness of decay. But a force was moving—the early "Yellow Peril"—of which they knew nothing. The Huns from Asia were falling murderously upon the Teutons in Central Europe. The Teutons were flung desperately against the weakened barrier of the Roman Empire, and it collapsed. The Empire had not enough "Roman" soldiers left. For decades it had employed "barbarians." So in 410 A.D. Rome fell, and the world wept. It was the doom of ancient civilization. Within another hundred years there was desolation from Gaul to Greece, from Cologne to Carthage. Within four more centuries civilization was extinct in Europe.

I have laid stress on the fact that Rome plundered

the world to enrich its patricians and amuse its plebeians. There is a very important fact to be set against this. Rome also civilized the world. It enslaved millions of men and robbed the older cities; but it set up its own finer institutions in large areas of Europe. Far away, in Gaul, Spain, Africa, the Balkans, and Asia Minor, Roman municipalities were set up. Schools were opened; aqueducts were built; law-courts were set up; beautiful buildings and arches and colonnades were reared. I saw, only the other day, two beautiful white marble baths discovered in the heart of rural England, where such things would not be known again for thirteen or fourteen centuries. Roman roads sprawl across Europe to-day. Let us be just. Rome had great virtues. With all its faults it played a splendid part in the civilization of Europe.

CHAPTER VIII

THE NEW ERA

MANY readers who have not had much time to study world-history will have been surprised to read that the fall of Rome involved a complete suspension of the story of the evolution of civilization. It is generally thought by the inexpert that there was a more or less continuous advance; that, in fact, the world made greater progress than ever after the fall of Rome. Now, if the reader wishes to have a mentally satisfactory view of the world's progress, and especially if he wishes to preserve something like a faith in man and a trust in evolution, it is very necessary to correct this error. The error is, of course, not due to any difference of opinion among historians. Every serious historian now admits that European civilization perished with Rome.

Let us sum up our impressions from our survey of the older world. The chief impression of those who make this survey for the first time is one of surprise, if not bewilderment, to find so much that we regard as distinctively modern well known thousands of years ago. Perfect drains in ancient Crete and irri-

gation and engineering, if not magnifying lenses (it is said that one has been found) in Babylon, four thousand years ago, are surprising enough. On the scientific side, however, we are not troubled. Our age is in this respect incalculably beyond any age that preceded it. In philosophy we cannot equal Greece; but philosophy is a mental exercise of questionable value, and we will lay no stress on it. The really disturbing thing is the constant discovery that earlier ages were equal to us in what we may broadly call moral progress. The minimum wage in ancient Babylon, the emphasis on justice in the Egyptian code, the same standard of personal conduct everywhere, the concern of the gods for righteousness, the full democracy of Athens and Rome, the beginning of an enfranchisement of women, the privileges of the Roman workers, the complete scheme of free education, the trade-combinations . . . It certainly looks as if we ought to be much more advanced than we are in the year 1921.

I have indicated the chief reason why we are not. It is war, the vampire of the human race. Why, for instance, you will ask, did not later ages build upon or develop the promising features of the old civilizations—the baths and drains of Crete, the social legislation of Hammurabi, the moral principles of Egypt, the Greek and Roman trade unions, and so on? Obviously, because these things were buried in the dust of the old civilizations; and it was war that put them there and robbed humanity of them. It was, in

every case, the recoil against military imperialism. If there is any plain lesson at all in history for our time, it is that; yet we are maintaining militarism and the constant possibility of war in more deadly shape than ever.

The particular reason of the great collapse of civilization after the fifth century of the Christian Era requires more careful study. Let us first show briefly how utter the collapse was. We speak, of course, of Europe only. Chinese civilization and Hindu civilization were untouched; but they had by this time settled in their unprogressive phase, and were not destined to add further to the general advance of civilization. Then there was a Greek civilization, with its centre at Constantinople. We saw how Constantine divided the Roman Empire by giving it a second capital. When the Western Empire fell, the Eastern was not overrun by the German barbarians—to any very dangerous extent—and it lasted for another thousand years. But this also was unprogressive, stagnant, in some respects odoriferous (see my *Empresses of Constantinople*). It had no cultural rival to stimulate it for some centuries; and then it was cut off from Europe by a squabble about theological definitions.

Europe sank appallingly low. The city of Rome itself simply decayed century by century. Before the year 600 A.D. all the glory we described in the last chapter was a deserted ruin. Forty thousand densely ignorant and disreputable Romans huddled in the

poorer quarters, instead of the one million people who had at one time filled the Eternal City. The superb buildings rotted year by year. There was now scarcely a school where there had been tens of thousands. By the eighth century even the clerics of Rome wrote barbarous Latin which is full of the grossest grammatical blunders; and their conduct was not less barbarous. The most fearful murders and outrages and orgies befouled the Papacy itself for long periods. So it was to the eleventh century. We know what England had become before Alfred. Was it civilized? Gaul and Spain and the other provinces were little better. Greek literature was entirely lost. Latin literature—much less valuable—was little read. Only a rare scholar here and there in centuries troubled to preserve fragments of the older culture. People scarcely knew that the world had several times been highly civilized.

This was, of course, mainly the effect of the downrush of the German barbarians over Southern Europe. Franks, Goths, Angles, Saxons, Vandals, Lombards, etc., poured in succession over the old civilization, as far as Carthage, and trod it out. The southerners were pygmies in face of the tall, blue-eyed warriors of the north. Whether, if the Church had been more wise and less selfish, it could have re-adjusted the world and restored the Roman system of education, it is no use speculating now. Here and there (in North Italy, for instance) the barbarians showed that under wise guidance they could take quickly to civili-

zation. But there was little wisdom anywhere. Ninety-nine per cent. of Europe became illiterate, sordid, semi-barbarous.

So the evolution of civilization had to begin over again. The German chiefs became kings. Their "men" became nobles, and enslaved the masses of the older Europeans under the new name of "serfs." For centuries Europe was a vast primitive agricultural population, with few artisans and less artists, and with a very drunken castle or court here and there. The development slowly proceeded on plain lines. These deep-drinking, hot-blooded "nobles" and kings, with their filthy manners and barbarous oaths (swearing by the belly and sex-organs of God, and so on) and wild licence, wanted gold cups and minstrels and fine garments and weapons. Art and commerce revived. Craftsmen and merchants increased. The craftsmen had some tradition of the old Roman "colleges" and formed Guilds. The Church found them saturated with Paganism, and at first tried to suppress them. But Churchmen became rich, very rich, and in turn employed artists and artisans and merchants. The jolly type of abbot or bishop—the common type—employed them as the barons did. The pious type employed them for the glory of God. It was all the same to the artists and to art.

Towns with a strong civic sense multiplied, with workers organized in Guilds and a solid and stubborn bourgeoisie, which began to show a bold face to barons

and kings. Here and there a Charlemagne or an Alfred got a dream of civilizing his kingdom. Now and again a good Pope appeared. But the main influence was the growth of towns—market and commercial centres. Kings and nobles were chronically athirst for drinking and fighting money; and the bourgeois had the money. Kings and nobles were also constantly at loggerheads, and they bribed towns by giving charters and liberating serfs. Towns grew richer and larger. They wanted fine churches, and after the eleventh century the great architecture of the Middle Ages, with all its subsidiary arts, developed. Art is always the first great development of a new civilization, because it thrives on the imagination, which is still vigorous with youth and not over-shadowed by intellect.

There was, therefore, a normal native development in Europe. There were also outside influences of great importance. We saw on an earlier page that the Persian civilization was peculiar in the fact that it revived twice after its downfall. The first revival was in the time of the Romans, but the splendid art and culture which it created were still alive when the Arabs overran Persia in the seventh century. As soon as the early Mohammedan rigorism relaxed, as it shortly did, the Arab rulers of Persia absorbed its civilization; and there was now a great Arabian civilization, which swept along North Africa and conquered Spain. In Syria the Arabs had found the old Greek

literature, and they carried Aristotle's works to Spain and cultivated science and philosophy with zeal. In the tenth century, when Europe was in its most barbaric phase since the New Stone Age, there was a magnificent Moorish civilization in Spain. In spite of the fierce religious hostility, on the Christian side, this could not fail to influence the rest of Europe, and during the eleventh and twelfth centuries it had a considerable effect. Jews were the natural intermediaries between the two. They were welcomed, and won distinction, in Spain. But even Christian scholars went as near as they dared to pick up crumbs of Moorish wisdom. Pope Sylvester II, one of the first medieval scientists, learned his geometry and mechanics there. Thus Euclid and Aristotle and other Greek writers became known again in Europe. A vast amount was learned from the Moors. The contact with the Mohammedans through the Crusades of the thirteenth century also helped, though it was much less important.

These things coincided with the internal development in Europe which we had described. The Scholastic Philosophy was evolved, largely as an answer to Aristotle and the Moors. Germs of science began to sprout. Roger Bacon plainly shows (as Copernicus does later) that he got his ideas from the Greeks. There was now a little more direct communication with the Greek Empire, and Greek works were coming in. From the early thirteenth century there was a good deal of religious scepticism in Italy, and scholars from

Constantinople were welcomed. They had, at least, the old Greek literature, though they had never developed its science and philosophy. This intercourse increased as Rome became more and more relaxed; and at length, in the fifteenth century, the Turks took Constantinople and drove flocks of Greek scholars to Italy.

It was the period of the Renaissance—the "re-birth" of letters, art, science, and philosophy. At one time we used to exaggerate the importance of this; as if Europe had remained asleep until the Greeks awoke it. The truth is, as we saw, that there had been a continuous, though very slow, development in Europe, and the stimulations given to it by the Moors and the Greeks helped it materially, but by no means caused it. From the eleventh century onward Europe had the chief condition of progress—a group of rival cultures (cities, etc.) stimulating each other—set up in it once more, and sufficient peace and prosperity to let it produce its natural effect. It was just the familiar story of the evolution of a human civilization over again. Moral and social progress still lagged far behind artistic; but that is a normal feature.

The Middle Age closed, and the Modern Age began, with a veritable splutter of energy on the part of the new Europe. Printing was discovered—a very quiet little invention at the time, but one of tremendous importance in the evolution of the race henceforward. Before that a preacher or a writer (hand-copied) might reach a thousand people. By the eighteenth

century he could, like Voltaire, reach a million. Through the world's press and the telegraph a new thought or a new invention can now reach a thousand million within a week. This is a new era.

Next, the world began to be knit together once more. The Dutch and Portuguese linked Europe with the Indies, China, and Japan. The Spaniards found America. The English followed them everywhere. The markets were stored with spices from the Levant, ivories from India, silks from China, and so on. The world was prodigiously stimulated and sparkling. Literature was finer than it had been in Rome. And on top of all this came the wonderful news of the great attack on the Papacy. The Reformation was in part—though it was not so meant by Luther, who was very human—a sour reaction against the new humanism. It checked development over a large area, particularly because it led to long and truculent wars. But it was a great and necessary event. It freed the mind from one tyranny and taught the right of rebellion against tradition. Witness its effect in England. It blighted the land for a time with its Puritanism, yet it was these very Puritans who discovered that the people are the King's master.

I do not propose to follow the evolution of modern civilization any further in this sketchy way. Let us rather cast up the accounts of the whole process.

In art one may doubt if the world will ever again reach the highest Greek and medieval standards, much

less surpass them. That is not a sign of loss of power, and it is foolish to flatter ourselves that we are rising higher by opening new and eccentric paths (Futurism, Cubism, etc.). Great art—or periods of great art—belong to the early phases of civilizations. The possibility of them seems to grow fainter as the intellectual part of man grows stronger. And since the proper ordering of this planet does essentially depend upon growth in wisdom—that is to say, upon intellectual development—the artistic consequence has to be faced. Isolated great artists may arise in any age or clime, but the artistic future in general must consist in raising the sentiment for art, the power of appreciating art, in the mass of the people. That would be an immeasurably greater service than a new galaxy of artistic geniuses.

Politically we have already, within the last half-century, passed beyond any of the older civilizations. No one would think of comparing with us the democracy of ancient Rome, with its dominating patricians, its dependent plebeians, its subject women, and its immense army of slaves; especially as it had not even become a full democracy when it frivolously sold all its power of self-government to emperors and rich men who built princely baths and circuses for it. The Eastern civilizations do not, of course, come into comparison at all, for they were absolute autocracies. The Greek democracy is the only earlier civilization that might be recalled to challenge comparison with

ours, and we need not fear it. The main body of the workers (slaves) and the women had no rights. The "voters," moreover, showed in their political life every defect that there is in modern politics, on a smaller scale. Grave as are the defects of our modern democracies, the machinery of self-government which has been won by the struggles of the nineteenth century is better than that of any earlier civilization, and is capable, if people would use it wisely and firmly, of evolving into an ideal democracy.

Socially and morally the comparison is more difficult. We are bound, if we have even a sound elementary knowledge of the matter, to abandon the old idea that we Europeans of to-day are far superior to the men and women of Egypt, Babylonia, Greece, and Rome. Any time up to the nineteenth century, and even in the early decades of that century, such a belief on the part of Europeans—who held it most strongly—was ludicrous. One has only to think of the London of a hundred years ago, with eighty per cent. of its people illiterate, with barbarous sports and utterly rotten political conditions and most unjust courts of justice and foul dens for housing half its population, to see the absurdity of the old idea.

Yet when we make a comparison with great care, we must conclude that we have passed the social and moral high-water mark of all the old civilizations. I take together the two aspects of life which are so often considered very different, because to me they are

one. I acknowledge no moral law that is not social law; and the world will be far more "moral," and a sweeter place to live in, when we teach children this instead of legends about the ancient Hebrews or any other disputable theories of virtue. The broad fact is that, while there are richer men in the world to-day than there ever were before, the mass of the people are better off; apart from ancient Rome, where the condition of the workers was artificial and impossible. There is a higher average type of character in every class. There is more zeal for idealist "movements" than was ever seen in the world before; indeed, no previous age remotely approaches ours in this respect, except the Stoic period in ancient Rome, which still fell short of ours.

On this point it is difficult to avoid confusion, as there are really two questions. One is whether within the limits of our own civilization there has been social progress—whether we in England are "better than our fathers." I have given a patient analysis of this elsewhere, and will only say here that we are far better morally, intellectually, socially, and politically than any previous generation in this country. The moment one turns from rhetoric to facts, one sees that the advance is very great. It is, in fact, only writers who deplore our "loss of faith," and would like to prove that it means a loss of character, who ever raise the question. But the second question, whether we Englishmen, Americans, French, etc., of the twentieth century are

superior to the men of older civilization, cannot be so easily answered. Here again the religious controversialist or propagandist, who nearly always uses rhetoric instead of facts, causes confusion. To him, of course, it is obvious—so obvious that he need not inquire into the facts—that we are not only superior to the "pagans" to-day, but even our fathers always were. As to our fathers, the claim is ludicrous; but as to this generation (about which, strange to say, the rhetorician is not so sure!), I should say that we have socially and morally passed the older nations. The rich and nobles are no longer the favourites of an autocratic prince. The mass of the workers are at least much better educated than they ever were before (even in Rome), and have higher standards.

It would be very useful to draw out this comparison in detail and study the causes of the recent advance. Obviously, it cannot be done here, and I must be content to say a brief word on one side of the question which is much discussed. Is the modern improvement due to moral or economic causes? On this—a large subject for the tail-end of a small work—I wish only to observe that there would be less controversy than there is if we cleared up certain essential ideas to begin with. What is a moral, what an economic, cause? To put it more pointedly: Were the ideas and sentiments of, say, Robert Owen and Karl Marx moral or economic causes? Or both? Certainly they were effective agencies. It is only by calling such

things economic and material that we can say that all progress is due to economic conditions.

My point is particularly well illustrated when we pass to the feature in which our age not only undeniably, but immeasurably, surpasses all earlier civilizations—in knowledge, science, intellectual development. The kind of superior "wisdom" that a few fantastic people say they find in Asia is mere verbiage, and to most people not pretty verbiage. It is knowledge of realities which counts, and that is what we mean by the word "science." In this province we put aside all hesitation. The progress made by the race, even beyond the level of Greek thought, is extraordinary. I have given the substantial explanation of this on an earlier page. We have created a social environment which, however little it may promote fine sentiment or fine character, does beyond question promote intelligence. We have found, in the transformation of life which science has effected, that this kind of knowledge pays—to the individual or the race—and it has therefore been subjected to an intense human selection.

There are some people who affect to regard this as a relatively unimportant gain to the race. Science, they say, deals with material things, and it argues no advance in the higher powers of man that we can deal with material things more effectively than ever.

Luckily this particular kind of nonsense grows rarer. Even if it were true that science dealt only with

material things, the gain would still be colossal. Without setting up any dogma of materialism, we can recognize that a transportation of the material conditions of life would be an incalculable gain, and would mean a stupendous triumph of mind, far beyond anything ever seen in earlier civilizations. It would mean the elimination or drastic restriction of disease; which in turn means, not only a vast alleviation of pain, but a removal of a colossal amount of moral disease and mental infirmity which, as all now admit, depends upon material conditions. It would mean an industrial improvement which would permit fairer conditions and opportunities for all.

But we would do well to ignore entirely this unctuous distinction between material and spiritual things. In so far as it is a precise and philosophical form of speech, it depends upon a theory of life which is disputed, and which we cannot consider here. There is, indeed, no need to consider it, for it is absurd to say that science is occupied only with what these people call material things. There is to-day a science of the mind as literally as there is a science of the stars; there is a science of beauty or of conduct just as there is a science of geology or of physiology. In fact, it would be to-day admitted that it is only when we proceed on purely scientific lines in investigating these things that we make progress.

And here at last we get the really consoling and supreme lesson of our study. Perhaps the statement

that the world has entered upon "the age of science" has sometimes been made without a clear and precise meaning. Certainly it has often been assailed, even ridiculed, by people who did not recognize its vital truth. It is at once the plainest and truest thing we could say about our age. Comte's law of the three stages was not an original discovery, but it is so true that it is almost a platitude. The first phase of the mind of man was theological, the second phase was metaphysical, the third—on which we have just entered —is positive or scientific.

It is emphatically the promise of the application of science to the whole of life which is the finest feature of our age; it is the delay in fulfilling that promise which leaves our civilization so crude and elementary. We apply science to the metals and chemicals of the soldier, even to the brains of his generals; but when it comes to studying the human conditions out of which wars arise, we leave the job to a group of utterly unscientific statesmen and diplomatists, who will consider a hundred things except what ought chiefly to be considered. We apply science to industry, and it invents machines for us which are as far beyond any mechanism known in Babylon or Athens as the Athenian loom was beyond the flint scraper of prehistoric man; but we will *not* apply science to the very greatest and gravest of all industrial problems—whether it is really necessary to keep the greater part of the race in a state of poverty and imperfect mental

development and let a few monopolize its art and culture. We apply science with brilliant success to discover the evolution of mind or the evolution of morals; but we do not consult it at all when we confront the very imperfect moral condition of the world, the poor general level of character from age to age, and the chaos of contradictory opinions which is responsible.

The old Greeks were right. The first virtue is wisdom. The uplifting of our race demands the cultivation of the heart—of fine sentiment and character—just as much as the cultivation of the mind, but the latter is more fundamental. We must know the right way before we can walk in it. That is the truth we are re-discovering. We are beginning to apply science to life. We have done with *laissez-faire*—which means, let things grow up. We are going to make them grow up. We have so bred and trained cows that they will give three thousand gallons of milk a year. There is not an element or feature of life that we cannot similarly raise to a vastly higher level. We are going to treat life as a scientific breeder treats plants. It shall all be plotted out, and its conditions scientifically studied, by a central brain. The idea of fighting it out and letting the better survive is the very opposite of science. Evolution guided by intelligence, constructive evolution, harmonious social co-operation—these are the ideals obviously thrust upon us by the very fact that intelligence now exists.

And it is an essential condition of this further and

more rapid progress that a way shall be found of putting an end to the old division of the race into a cultivated few and an uncultivated many. Democracy is inconsistent with such a situation, and is always in danger of being wrecked by it. Fine sentiment is inconsistent with it. The time is coming when men of brain will themselves devise a way out, for our age is now rapidly advancing in sentiment as well as in intelligence. When these conditions—the general and concentrated application of science to life and the elevation of the mass of the people until they can demand and watch it—are realized, the race will move on at an amazing pace. I am optimistic enough to believe that this new era, new sort of evolution, will begin in the twentieth century. And before the race lie *millions* of years during which this planet will be habitable.

In fine a word to the croakers who say that science may work out definite tasks, but it assigns no general goal to life. The fact is that you need no science whatever to answer that foolish question: What is the end of life? It is whatever we men may choose to make it; and since we live in social groups, and a man's actions depend upon and influence his neighbours, it is what we choose to make it *collectively*. There is no doubt to-day about our choice. We are going to develop what is most clearly worth developing in us: intelligence, refinement, character, health. We are going to eliminate pain, unhappiness, ignorance,

coarseness, violence, and poverty, as far as possible. We are going to have a hundred commonwealths, ten thousand cities, competing with each other in the realization of this ideal. So, when the war drums beat no longer and the strong have ceased to exploit the weak, the fundamental condition of progress, mutual stimulation, will be provided on a higher plane, and the close interconnection of the whole world will make it more effective than ever.

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